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## THE DYNASTS

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# THE DYNASTS

A DRAMA

OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS,  
IN THREE PARTS, NINETEEN  
ACTS, & ONE HUNDRED AND  
THIRTY SCENES

BY

THOMAS HARDY

PART FIRST

*And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars.*

New York

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## PREFACE

THE Drama here presented is concerned with the Great Historical Calamity, or Clash of Peoples, artificially brought about some hundred years ago.

The choice of such a subject was mainly due to three accidents of locality. It chanced that the writer was familiar with a part of England that lay within hail of the watering-place in which King George the Third had his favourite summer residence during the war with the first Napoléon, and where he was visited by ministers and others who bore the weight of English affairs on their more or less competent shoulders at that stressful time. Secondly, this district, being also near the coast which had echoed with rumours of invasion in their intensest form while the descent threatened, was formerly animated by memories and traditions of the

desperate military preparations for that contingency. Thirdly, the same countryside happened to include the village which was the birthplace of Nelson's flag-captain at Trafalgar.

When, as the first published result of these accidents, *The Trumpet-Major* was printed, more than twenty years ago, I found myself in the tantalizing position of having touched the fringe of a vast international tragedy without being able, through limits of plan, knowledge, and opportunity, to enter further into its events; a restriction that prevailed for many years. But the provokingly slight regard paid to English influence and action throughout the struggle by those Continental writers who had dealt imaginatively with Napoléon's career, seemed always to leave room for a new handling of the theme which should re-embody the features of this influence in their true proportion; and accordingly, on a belated day about six years back, the following play was outlined, to be taken up now and then at wide intervals ever since.

It may, I think, claim at least a tolerable fidelity to the facts of its date as they are

given in ordinary records. Whenever any evidence of the words really spoken or written by the characters in their various situations was attainable, as close a paraphrase has been aimed at as was compatible with the form chosen. And in all cases outside oral tradition, accessible scenery, and existing relics, my indebtedness for detail to the abundant pages of the historian, the biographer, and the journalist, English and foreign, has been, of course, continuous.<sup>1</sup>

It was thought proper to introduce, as supernatural spectators of the terrestrial drama, certain impersonated abstractions, or Intelligences, called Spirits. They are intended to be taken by the reader for what they may be worth as contrivances of the fancy merely. Their doctrines are but tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a systematized philosophy warranted to lift "the burthen of the mystery" of this unintelligible world. The chief thing hoped for them is that they and their utterances may have dramatic plausibility enough to procure for them, in the words of Coleridge, "that

<sup>1</sup> It is intended to give a list of the chief authorities at the end of the Third Part.

willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." The wide prevalence of the Monistic theory of the Universe forbade, in this twentieth century, the importation of Divine personages from any antique Mythology as ready-made sources or channels of Causation, even in verse, and excluded the celestial machinery of, say, *Paradise Lost*, as peremptorily as that of the *Iliad* or the *Eddas*. And the abandonment of the masculine pronoun in allusions to the First or Fundamental Energy seemed a necessary and logical consequence of the long abandonment by thinkers of the anthropomorphic conception of the same.

These phantasmal Intelligences are divided into groups, of which one only—that of the Pities—approximates to “the Universal Sympathy of human nature—the spectator idealized”<sup>1</sup> of the Greek Chorus, the remainder being eclectically chosen auxiliaries whose signification may be readily discerned. In point of literary form, the scheme of contrasted Choruses and other conventions of this external feature was shaped with a single view to the modern expression of a

<sup>1</sup> Schlegel.

modern outlook, and in frank divergence from classical and other dramatic precedent which ruled the ancient voicings of ancient themes.

It may hardly be necessary to inform readers that in devising this chronicle-piece no attempt has been made to create that completely organic structure of action, and closely-webbed development of character and motive, which are demanded in a drama strictly self-contained. A panoramic show like the present is a series of historical "ordinates" (to use a term in geometry): the subject is familiar to all; and foreknowledge is assumed to fill in the curves required to combine the whole gaunt framework into an artistic unity. The spectator, in thought, becomes a performer whenever called upon, and cheerfully makes himself the utility-man of the gaps. Should he refuse to do this, a historical presentment on an intermittent plan, in which the *dramatis personæ* number some hundreds, exclusive of crowds and armies, becomes in his individual case unsuitable.

In this assumption of a completion of the story by those to whom the drama is addressed, it is interesting, if unnecessary, to name an exemplar as old as Aeschylus, whose

plays are, as Professor Verrall reminds us,<sup>1</sup> scenes from stories taken as known, and would be unintelligible without supplementary scenes of the imagination.

Readers will readily discern, too, that *The Dynasts* is a play intended simply for mental performance, and not for the stage. Some critics have averred that to declare a drama as being not for the stage is to make an announcement whose subject and predicate cancel each other. The question seems to be an unimportant matter of terminology. Compositions cast in this shape were, without doubt, originally written for the stage only, and as a consequence their nomenclature of "Act," "Scene," and the like, was drawn directly from the vehicle of representation. But in the course of time such a shape would reveal itself to be an eminently readable one; moreover, by dispensing with the theatre altogether, a freedom of treatment was attainable in this form that was denied where the material possibilities of stagery had to be rigorously remembered. With the careless mechanicism of human speech, the technicalities of practical mumming were retained

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to the *Choephoroi*.



in these productions when they had ceased to be concerned with the stage at all.

To say, then, in the present case, that a writing in play-shape is not to be played, is merely another way of stating that such writing has been done in a form for which there chances to be no brief definition save one already in use for works that it superficially but not entirely resembles.

Whether mental performance alone may not eventually be the fate of all drama other than that of contemporary or frivolous life, is a kindred question not without interest. The mind naturally flies to the triumphs of the Hellenic and Elizabethan theatre in exhibiting scenes laid "far in the Unapparent," and asks why they should not be repeated. But the meditative world is older, more invidious, more nervous, more quizzical, than it once was, and being unhappily perplexed by —

Riddles of Death Thebes never knew,

may be less ready and less able than Hellas and old England were to look through the insistent, and often grotesque, substance at the thing signified.

A practicable compromise may conceivably result, taking the shape of a monotonic delivery of speeches, with dreamy conventional gestures, something in the manner traditionally maintained by the old Christmas mummers, the curiously hypnotizing impressiveness of whose automatic style — that of persons who spoke by no will of their own — will be remembered by all who ever experienced it. Gauzes or screens to blur outlines might still further shut off the actual. But on this branch of the subject the present writer is unqualified to speak.

T. H.

*September, 1903.*

THE DYNASTS

PART FIRST



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# CHARACTERS OF PART FIRST

## I. PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES

{ THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS.  
CHORUS OF THE YEARS.

{ THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES.  
CHORUS OF THE PITIES.

{ SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC.  
CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC SPIRITS.

{ THE SPIRIT OF RUMOUR.  
CHORUS OF RUMOURS.

THE SHADE OF THE EARTH.

SPIRIT-MESSENGERS.

RECORDING ANGELS.

## II. PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

The names printed in italics are those of mute figures only.

### MEN

GEORGE THE THIRD.	<i>Count Munster.</i>
<i>The Duke of Cumberland.</i>	<i>Other Peers, Ministers, ex-</i>
PITT.	<i>Ministers, Members of</i>
FOX.	<i>Parliament, and Persons</i>
SHERIDAN.	<i>of Quality.</i>
WINDHAM.	—
WHITBREAD.	NELSON.
TIERNEY.	COLLINGWOOD.
BATHURST AND FULLER.	HARDY.
<i>Lord Chancellor Eldon.</i>	SECRETARY SCOTT.
EARL OF MALMESBURY.	DR. BEATTY.
LORD MULGRAVE.	DR. MAGRATH.
ANOTHER CABINET MINISTER.	DR. ALEXANDER SCOTT.
<i>Lord Grenville.</i>	BURKE, PURSER.
<i>Viscount Castlereagh.</i>	<i>Lieutenant Pasco.</i>
<i>Viscount Sidmouth.</i>	ANOTHER LIEUTENANT.
ANOTHER NOBLE LORD.	POLLARD, A MIDSHIPMAN.
ROSE.	ANOTHER MIDSHIPMAN.
<i>Canning.</i>	<i>Captain Adair.</i>
<i>Perceval.</i>	<i>Lieutenants Ram and Whip-</i>
<i>Grey.</i>	<i>ple.</i>
<i>Speaker Abbot.</i>	<i>Other English Naval Offi-</i>
TOMLINE, BISHOP OF LIN-	<i>cers.</i>
COLN.	<i>Sergeant-major Secker and</i>
SIR WALTER FARQUHAR.	<i>Marines.</i>

*Staff and other Officers of  
the English Army.*

A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS.

*Regiments of the English  
Army and Hanoverian.*

SAILORS AND BOATMEN.

A MILITIAMAN.

*Naval crews.*

*The Lord Mayor and Cor-  
poration of London.*

A GENTLEMAN OF FASHION.

WILTSHIRE, A COUNTRY  
GENTLEMAN.

A HORSEMAN.

TWO BEACON-WATCHERS.

ENGLISH CITIZENS AND BUR-  
GESSES.

COACH AND OTHER HIGH-  
WAY-PASSENGERS.

MESSENGERS, SERVANTS, AND  
RUSTICS.

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE.

DECRÈS.

DARU.

MONGE, A PHILOSOPHER.

BERTHIER.

MURAT.

SOULT.

NEY.

LANNES.

*Bernadotte.*

*Marmont.*

*Dupont.*

*Oudinot.*

*Davoust.*

*Vandamme.*

*Other French Marshals.*

A SUB-OFFICER.

VILLENEUVE.

LAURISTON.

FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE.

LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON.

LIEUTENANT FOURNIER.

DE PRIGNY, HEAD OF STAFF.

*Captain Lucas.*

OTHER FRENCH NAVAL  
OFFICERS AND PETTY  
OFFICERS.

*Seamen of the French and  
Spanish Navies.*

*Regiments of the French  
Army.*

COURIERS.

HERALDS.

*Aides, Officials, Pages, etc.*

ATTENDANTS.

*French Citizens.*

CARDINAL CAPRARA.

*Priests, Acolyths, and Chor-  
isters.*

*Italian Doctors and Presi-  
dents of Institutions.*

*Milanese Citizens.*

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

*The Emperor Alexander.*

THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND.

*Prince John of Lichten-  
stein.*

PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG.

MACK.	COUNT BUXHÖVDEN.
JELLACHICH.	COUNT MILORÁDOVICH.
RIESCH.	DOKHTÓROF.
WEIROTHER.	—
ANOTHER AUSTRIAN GEN- ERAL.	<i>Giulay, Gottesheim, Klenau, and Prschebiszewsky.</i>
TWO AUSTRIAN OFFICERS.	<i>Regiments of the Austrian Army.</i>
—	<i>Regiments of the Russian Army.</i>
PRINCE KUTÚZOF.	
COUNT LANGERON.	

## WOMEN

<i>Queen Charlotte.</i>	<i>Princesses and Ladies of</i>
<i>English Princesses.</i>	<i>Joséphine's Court.</i>
<i>Ladies of the English Court.</i>	<i>Seven Milanese Young Ladies.</i>
LADY HESTER STANHOPE.	—
A LADY.	<i>City- and Towns-women.</i>
<i>Lady Caroline Lamb, Mrs.</i>	<i>Country-women.</i>
<i>Damer, and other English</i>	A MILITIAMAN'S WIFE.
<i>Ladies.</i>	A STREET-WOMAN.
—	<i>Ship-women.</i>
THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE.	<i>Servants.</i>

## FORE SCENE

### THE OVERWORLD

Enter the Ancient Spirit and Chorus of the Years,  
the Spirit and Chorus of the Pities, the Shade of the  
Earth, the Spirits Sinister and Ironic with their Choruses,  
Rumours, Spirit-Messengers, and Recording Angels.

#### SHADE OF THE EARTH

*What of the Immanent Will and Its designs?*

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*It works unconsciously, as heretofore,  
Eternal artistries in Circumstance,  
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt æsthetic rote,  
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,  
And not their consequence.*

#### CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Still thus? Still thus?  
Ever unconscious!*

*An automatic sense  
Unweeting why or whence?  
Then be the inevitable, as of old,  
Although that so it be we dare not hold!*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hold what you list, fond unbelieving Sprites,  
You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss,  
Which thinking on, yet weighing not Its thought,  
Unchecks Its clock-like laws.*

## SPIRIT SINISTER (aside)

*Good, as before.  
My little engines, then, will still have play.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Why doth It so and so, and ever so,  
This viewless, voiceless Turner of the Wheel?*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*As one sad story runs, It lends Its heed  
To other worlds, being wearied out with this;  
Wherefore Its mindlessness of earthly woes.  
Some, too, have told at whiles that rightfully  
Its warefulness, Its care, this planet lost  
When in her early growth and crudity  
By bad mad acts of severance men contrived,  
Working such nescience by their own device. —  
At least, so stands it in some chronicles,  
Though not in mine.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Meet is it, none the less,  
To bear in thought that though Its consciousness  
May be estranged, engrossed afar, or sealed,  
Sublunar shocks may wake Its watch anon?*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay. In the Foretime, even to the germ of  
Being,  
Nothing appears of shape to indicate  
That cognizance has marshalled things terrene,  
Or will (such is my thinking) in my span.  
Rather they show that, like a knitter drowsed,  
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,  
The Will has woven with an absent heed  
Since life first was; and ever will so weave.*

## SPIRIT SINISTER

*Hence we've rare dramas going—more so since  
It wove Its web in that Ajaccian womb!*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Well, no more thus on what no mind can mete.  
Our scope is but to register and watch  
By means of this great gift accorded us—  
The free trajection of our entities.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*On things terrene, then, I would say that though  
The human news wherewith the Rumours  
stirred us*

*May please thy temper, Years, 'twere better far  
Such deeds were nulled, and this strange man's  
career*

*Wound up, as making inharmonious jars  
In her creation whose meek wraith we know.  
The more that he, turned man of mere traditions,  
Now profits naught. For the large potencies  
Instilled into his idiosyncrasy—  
To throne fair Liberty in Privilege' room—  
Are taking taint, and sink to common plots  
For his own gain.*

## SHADE OF THE EARTH

*And who, then, Cordial One,  
Wouldst substitute for this Intractable?*

## CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*We would establish those of kindlier build,  
In fair Compassions skilled,  
Men of deep art in life-development ;  
Watchers and warders of thy varied lands,  
Men surfeited of laying heavy hands  
Upon the innocent,  
The mild, the fragile, the obscure content  
Among the myriads of thy family.*



*Those, too, who love the true, the excellent,  
And make their daily moves a melody.*

#### SHADE OF THE EARTH

*They may come, will they. I am not averse.  
Yet know I am but the ineffectual Shade  
Of her the Travailer, herself a thrall  
To It; in all her labourings curbed and kinged!*

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Shall such be mooted now? Already change  
Hath played strange pranks since first I brooded  
here.  
But old Laws operate yet; and phase and  
phase  
Of men's dynastic and imperial moils  
Shape on accustomed lines. Though, as for me,  
I care not how they shape, or what they be.*

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*You seem to have small sense of mercy, Sire?*

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Mercy? I view, not urge; nor more than  
mark  
What designate your titles Good and Ill.  
'Tis not in me to feel with, or against,  
These flesh-hinged mannikins Its hand upwind's  
To click-clack off Its preadjusted laws;*

*But only through my centuries to behold  
Their aspects, and their movements, and their  
mould.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*They are shapes that bleed, mere marionettes or no,  
And each has parcel in the total Will.*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Which overrides them as a whole its parts  
In other entities.*

## SPIRIT SINISTER (aside)

*Limbs of Itself:  
Each one a jot of It in quaint disguise?  
I'll fear all men henceforward!*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Go to. Let this terrestrial tragedy—*

## SPIRIT IRONIC

*Nay, comedy—*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Let this earth-tragedy  
Whereof ye spake, afford a spectacle  
Forthwith conned closelier than your custom is.—*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*How does it stand? (To a Recording Angel)  
Open and chant the page*

*Thou'st lately writ, that sums these happenings,  
In brief reminder of their instant points  
Slighted by us amid our converse here.*

RECORDING ANGEL (from a book, in recitative)

*Now mellow-eyed Peace is made captive,  
And Vengeance is chartered  
To deal forth its dooms on the Peoples  
With sword and with spear.*

*Men's musings are busy with forecasts  
Of musters and battle,  
And visions of shock and disaster  
Rise red on the year.*

*The easternmost ruler sits wistful,  
And tense he to midward;  
The King to the west mans his borders  
In front and in rear.*

*While one they eye, flushed from his crowning,  
Ranks legions around him  
To shake the enisled neighbour nation  
And close her career!*

SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS (aerial music)

*O woven-winged squadrons of Toulon  
And fellows of Rochefort,  
Wait, wait for a wind, and draw westward  
Ere Nelson be near!*

*For he reads not your force, or your freightage,  
Of warriors fell-handed,  
Or when they will join for the onset,  
Or whither they steer!*

## SEMICHORUS II

*O Nelson, so zealous a watcher  
Through months-long of cruising,  
Thy foes may elude thee a moment,  
Put forth, and get clear;*

*And rendezvous westerly straightway  
With Spain's aiding navies,  
And hasten to head violation  
Of Albion's frontier!*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Methinks too much assurance thrills your note  
On secrets in my locker, gentle sprites;  
But it may serve. — Our thought being now  
reflexed*

*To forces operant on this English isle,  
Behoves it us to enter scene by scene,  
And watch the spectacle of Europe's moves  
In her embroil, as they were self-ordained  
According to the naïve and liberal creed  
Of our great-hearted young Compassionates,  
Forgetting the Prime Mover of the gear  
As puppet-watchers him who pulls the strings.—*

*You'll mark the twitchings of this Bonaparte  
As he with other figures foots his reel,  
Until he twitch him into his lonely grave:  
Also regard the frail ones that his flings  
Have made gyrate like animalcula  
In tepid pools.—Hence to the precinct, then,  
And count as framework to the stagery  
Yon architraves of sunbeam-smitten cloud.—  
So may ye judge Earth's jackaclocks to be  
Not fugged by one Will, but function-free.*

The nether sky opens, and Europe is disclosed as a prone and emaciated figure, the Alps shaping like a backbone, and the branching mountain-chains like ribs, the peninsular plateau of Spain forming a head. Broad and lengthy lowlands stretch from the north of France across Russia like a grey-green garment hemmed by the Ural mountains and the glistening Arctic Ocean.

The point of view then sinks downwards through space, and draws near to the surface of the perturbed countries, where the peoples, distressed by events which they did not cause, are seen writhing, crawling, heaving, and vibrating in their various cities and nationalities.

### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to the Spirit of the Pities)

*As key-scene to the whole, I first lay bare  
The Will-webs of thy fearful questioning;  
For know that of my antique privileges  
This gift to visualize the Mode is one,  
(Though by exhaustive strain and effort only,  
See, then, and learn, ere my power pass again.*

A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, enduing men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included in the display.

### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (after a pause)

*Amid this scene of bodies substantive  
Strange waves I sight like winds grown visible,  
Which bear men's forms on their innumerable  
coils,  
Twining and serpentining round and through.  
Also retracting threads like gossamers —  
Except in being irresistible —  
Which complicate with some, and balance all.*

### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*These are the Prime Volitions,—fibrils, veins,  
Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause,  
That heave throughout the Earth's compositure.  
Their sum is like the lobule of a Brain  
Evolving always that it wots not of;  
A Brain whose whole connotes the Everywhere,  
And whose procedure may but be discerned  
By phantom eyes like ours; the while unguessed  
Of those it stirs, who (even as ye do) dream  
Their motions free, their orderings supreme;  
Each life apart from each, with power to mete  
Its own day's measures; balanced, self-complete;*

*Though they subsist but atoms of the One  
 Labouring through all, divisible from none;  
 But this no further now. Deem yet man's  
 deeds self-done.*

The anatomy of the Immanent Will disappears.

GENERAL CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES  
 (aerial music)

*We'll close up Time, as a bird its van,  
 We'll traverse Space, as spirits can,  
 Link pulses severed by leagues and years,  
 Bring cradles into touch with biers;  
 So that the far-off Consequence appears  
 Prompt at the heel of foregone Cause.—  
 The PRIME, that willed ere wareness was,  
 Whose Brain perchance is Space, whose Thought  
 its laws,  
 Which we as threads and streams discern,  
 We may but muse on, never learn.*

END OF THE FORE SCENE

## ACT FIRST

### SCENE I

ENGLAND. A RIDGE IN WESSEX

The time is a fine day in March, 1805. A highway crosses the ridge, which is near the sea, and the south coast is seen bounding the landscape below, the open Channel extending beyond.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hark now, and gather how the martial mood  
Stirs England's humblest hearts. Anon we'll  
trace  
Its heavings in the upper coteries there.*

#### SPIRIT SINISTER

*Ay ; begin small, and so lead up to the  
greater. It is a sound dramatic principle. I  
always aim to follow it in my pestilences, fires,  
famines, and other comedies. And though, to  
be sure, I did not in my Lisbon earthquake, I  
did in my French Terror, and my St. Domingo  
burlesque.*



## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*THY Lisbon earthquake, THY French Terror.  
Wait.*

*Thinking thou will'st, thou dost but indicate.*

A stage-coach enters, with passengers outside. Their voices after the foregoing sound thin and small, as from another medium.

## FIRST PASSENGER

There seems to be a deal of traffic over Ridgeway, even at this time o' year.

## SECOND PASSENGER

Yes. It is because the King and Court are coming down here later on. They wake up this part rarely. . . . See, now, how the Channel and coast open out like a chart. That patch of mist below us is the town we are bound for. There's the Isle of Slingers beyond, like a floating snail. That wide bay on the right is where the "Abergavenny," Captain John Wordsworth, was wrecked last month. One can see half across to France up here.

## FIRST PASSENGER

Half across. And then another little half, and then all that's behind—the Corsican mischief!

## SECOND PASSENGER

Yes. People who live hereabout — I am a native of these parts — feel the nearness of France more than they do inland.

## FIRST PASSENGER

That's why we have seen so many of these marching regiments on the road. This year his grandest attempt upon us is to be made, I reckon.

## SECOND PASSENGER

May we be ready!

## FIRST PASSENGER

Well, we ought to be. We've had alarms enough, God knows.

## THIRD PASSENGER

I much doubt his intention to come at all.

Some companies of infantry are seen ahead, and the coach presently overtakes them.

## SOLDIERS (singing as they walk)

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty;  
If he won't sail, lest the wind should blow,  
We shall have marched for nothing, O!  
Right fol-lol!

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty,  
If he be sea-sick ; says " No, no !"  
We shall have marched for nothing, O !  
Right fol-lol !

The soldiers draw aside, and the coach passes on.

SECOND PASSENGER

Is there truth in it that Bonaparte wrote a letter to the King last month ?

FIRST PASSENGER

Yes, sir. A letter in his own hand, in which he expected the King to reply to him in the same manner.

SOLDIERS (continuing, as they are left behind)

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty ;  
Never mind, mates ; we'll be merry, though  
We may have marched for nothing, O !  
Right fol-lol !

THIRD PASSENGER

And was Boney's letter friendly ?

FIRST PASSENGER

Certainly, sir. He requested peace with the King.

## THIRD PASSENGER

And why shouldn't the King reply in the same manner?

## FIRST PASSENGER

What! Encourage this man in an act of shameless presumption, and give him the pleasure of considering himself the equal of the King of England — whom he actually calls his brother!

## THIRD PASSENGER

He must be taken for what he is, not for what he was; and if he calls King George his brother it doesn't speak badly for his friendliness.

## FIRST PASSENGER

Whether or no, the King, rightly enough, did not reply in person, but through Lord Mulgrave our Foreign Minister, to the effect that his Britannic Majesty cannot give a specific answer till he has communicated with the Continental powers.

## THIRD PASSENGER

Both the manner and the matter of the reply are British; but a huge mistake.

## FIRST PASSENGER

Sir, am I to deem you a friend of Bonaparte, a traitor to your country ——

## THIRD PASSENGER

Damn my wig, sir, if I'll be called a traitor by you or any Court sycophant at all at all!

## SECOND PASSENGER

Gentlemen, forbear, forbear! Should such differences be suffered to arise on a spot where we may, in less than three months, be fighting for our very existence? This is foolish, I say. Heaven alone, who reads the secrets of this man's heart, can tell what his meaning and intent may be, and if his letter has been answered wisely or no.

The coach is stopped to skid the wheel for the descent of the hill, and before it starts again a dusty horseman overtakes it.

## SEVERAL PASSENGERS

A London messenger! (To horseman) Any news, sir? We are from Bristol only.

## HORSEMAN

Yes; much. We have declared war against Spain, an error giving vast delight

of France. Bonaparte says he will date his next dispatches from London, and the landing of his army may be daily expected.

[Exit horseman.]

### THIRD PASSENGER (to First)

Sir, I apologize. He's not to be trusted! War is his name, and aggression is with him!

A silence follows. The coach and passengers move downwards and disappear towards the coast.

### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Ill chanced it that the English monarch George  
Did not respond to the said Emperor!*

### SPIRIT SINISTER

*I saw good sport therein, and pæan'd the Will  
That It restrained so stultifying a move!  
Which would have marred the European broil,  
And sheathed all swords, and silenced every  
gun  
That riddles human flesh.*

### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*O say no more;  
If aught could gratify the Absolute  
'Twould verily be thy censure, not thy praise!*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*The ruling was that we should witness things  
And not dispute them. To the drama, then.  
Emprizes over-Channel are the key  
To this land's stir and ferment. — Thither we.*

Clouds gather over the scene, and slowly open elsewhere.

## SCENE II

PARIS. OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF MARINE

ADMIRAL DECRÈS seated at a table. A knock without.

DECRÈS

Come in! Good news, I hope!

[An attendant enters.

ATTENDANT

A courier, sir.

DECRÈS

Show him in straightway.

[The attendant goes out.

From the Emperor

As I expected!

A courier is admitted, who delivers a dispatch.

COURIER

Sir, for your own hand,  
And yours alone.

DECRÈS

Thanks. Be in waiting near.

[The courier withdraws.]

DECRÈS *reads*:

“ I am resolved that no wild dream of Ind,  
And what we there might win; or of the  
West,

And bold re-conquest there of Surinam  
And other Dutch retreats along those coasts,  
Or British islands nigh, shall draw me now  
From piercing into England through Boulogne  
As lined in my first plan. If I do strike,  
I strike effectively; to forge which feat  
There's but one way — planting a mortal  
wound

In England's heart — the very English land —  
Whose insolent and cynical reply  
To my well-based complaint on breach of faith  
Concerning Malta, as at Amiens pledged,



Has lighted up anew such flames of ire  
As may involve the world. — Now to the  
case :

Our naval forces can be all assembled  
Without the foe's foreknowledge or surmise,  
By these rules following ; to whose text I ask  
Your gravest application ; and, when conned,  
That steadfastly you stand by word and word,  
Making no question of one jot therein.

“ First, then, let Villeneuve wait a favour-  
ing wind

For process westward swift to Martinique,  
Coaxing the English after. Join him there  
Gravina, Missiessy, and Ganteaume ;  
Which junction once effected all our keels —  
Now nigh to sixty sail — regain the Manche,  
While the pursuers linger in the West  
At hopeless fault. — Having hoodwinked  
them thus,

Our boats skim over, disembark the army,  
And in the twinkling of a patriot's eye  
All London will be ours.

“ In strictest secrecy carve this to shape :  
Let never an admiral or captain know  
Save Villeneuve and Ganteaume ; and pen  
each charge  
With your own quill. The surelier to out-  
wit them

I start for Italy ; and there, as 'twere  
Engrossed in fêtes and Coronation rites,

Abide till, at the need, I reach Boulogne,  
And head the enterprize. — NAPOLÉON.”

DECRÈS reflects, and turns to write.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*More ill? How is Decrès ordained to move?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*He sets him to the work. First to Villeneuve,  
His onetime comrade and his boyhood's friend,  
Now lingering at Toulon, he jots swift lines,  
Then duly to Ganteaume. — They are sealed  
forthwith,  
And superscribed: "Break not until at sea."*

Boisterous singing is heard in the street.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I hear confused and simmering sounds without,  
Like those which thrill the hives at evenfall  
When swarming nears.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*They but proclaim the crowd,  
Which sings and shouts its hot enthusiasms  
For this dead-ripe design on England's shore,  
Till the persuasion of its own plump words,  
Acting upon mercurial temperaments,  
Makes hope as prophecy. "Our Emperor*

*Will show himself (say they) in this exploit  
 Unwavering, keen, and irresistible  
 As is the lightning-prong. Our vast flotillas  
 Have been embodied as by sorcery;  
 Soldiers made seamen, and the ports transformed  
 To rocking cities casemented with guns.  
 Against these valiants balance England's means:  
 Raw merchant-fellows from the counting-house,  
 Raw labourers from the fields, who thumb for  
 arms  
 Clumsy untempered pikes forged hurriedly,  
 And fancy them full quipt. Their batteries,  
 Their flying carriages, their catamarans,  
 Shall profit not, and in one summer night  
 We'll find us there!"*

RECORDING ANGEL

*And is this prophecy true?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Occasion will reveal.*

SHADE OF THE EARTH

*What boots it, Sire,  
 To down this dynasty, set that one up,  
 Goad panting peoples to the throes thereof,  
 Make wither here my fruit, maintain it there,  
 And hold me travailing through fineless years  
 In vain and objectless monotony,*

*When all such tedious conjuring could be shunned  
By uncreation? Howsoever wise  
The governance of these massed mortalities,  
A juster wisdom his who should have ruled  
They had not been.*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, something hidden urged  
The giving matter motion; and these coils  
Are, maybe, good as any.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But why any?*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Sprite of Compassions, ask the Immanent!  
I am but an accessory of Its works  
Whom chance has rendered conscious; and at  
most  
Figure as bounden witness of Its laws.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*How ask the aim of unrelaxing Will,  
Tranced in Its purpose to unknowingness?  
(If thy words, Ancient Phantom, token true.)*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Thou answerest well. But cease to ask of me.  
Meanwhile the mime proceeds. — We turn here-  
from,*

*Change our homuncules, and observe forthwith  
How the High Influence sways the English realm,  
And how the jacks click out their reasonings  
there.*

The Cloud-curtain draws.

### SCENE III

#### LONDON. THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS

A long chamber with a gallery on each side supported by thin columns having gilt Ionic capitals. Three round-headed windows are at the further end, above the Speaker's chair, which is backed by a huge pedimented structure in white and gilt, surmounted by the lion and the unicorn. The windows are uncurtained, one being open, through which some boughs are seen waving in the midnight gloom without. Wax candles, burnt low, wave and gutter in a brass chandelier which hangs from the middle of the ceiling, and in branches projecting from the galleries.

The House is sitting, the benches, which extend round to the Speaker's elbows, being closely packed, and the galleries likewise full. Among the members present on the Government side are PITT and other ministers with their supporters, including CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, LORD C. SOMERSET, ERSKINE, W. DUNDAS, HUSKISSON, ROSE, BEST, ELLIOT, DALLAS, and the general body of the party. On the opposite side are noticeable FOX, SHERIDAN, WINDHAM, WHITBREAD, GREY, T. GRENVILLE, TIERNEY, EARL TEMPLE, PONSONBY, G. and H. WALPOLE, DUDLEY NORTH, and TIMOTHY SHELLEY. Speaker ABBOT occupies the Chair.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to two Recording  
Angels)

*As prelude to the scene, as means to aid  
Our younger comrades in its construing,  
Pray ope your scripture, and rehearse in brief  
The reasonings here of late—to whose effects  
Words of to-night form sequence.*

The Recording Angels chant from their books,  
antiphonally, in a minor recitative.

ANGEL I (aerial music)

*Feeble-framed dull unresolve, unresourcefulness,  
Sat in the halls of the Kingdom's high Councillors,  
Whence an untactical torpid despondency  
Weighed as with winter the national mind.*

ANGEL II

*England stands forth to the sword of Napoléon  
Nakedly—not an ally in support of her ;  
Men and munitions dispersed inexpediently ;  
Projects of range and scope poorly defined.*

ANGEL I

*Once more doth Pitt deem the land crying loud  
to him.—  
Frail though and spent, and an hungered for  
restfulness  
Once more responds he, dead fervours to energize,  
Aims to concentre, slack efforts to bind.*

## ANGEL II

*Ere the first fruit thereof voices grow audible,  
 Holding as hapless his dream of home guardian-  
 ship,  
 Festively, earnestly, shouting it serviceless,  
 Tardy, inept, and uncouthly designed.*

## ANGELS I AND II

*So now, to-night, in the slashing old sentences,  
 Hear them speak, — gravely these, those with  
 gay-heartedness, —  
 Midst their admonishments little conceiving how  
 Scarlet the scroll that the years will unwind !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit of  
the Years)

*Let us put on and suffer for the nonce  
 The feverish fleshings of Humanity,  
 And join the pale debaters here convened.  
 So may thy soul be won to sympathy  
 By donning their poor mould.*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I'll humour thee,  
 Though my unpassioned essence could not change  
 Did I incarn in moulds of all mankind !*

## SPIRIT IRONIC

*'Tis enough to make every little dog in England run to mixen to hear this Pitt sung so strenuously! I'll be the third of the incarnate, on the chance of having the tune played the other way.*

## SPIRIT SINISTER

*And I the fourth. There's sure to be something in my line toward, where politicians are gathered together!*

The four Phantoms enter the Gallery of the House in the disguise of ordinary strangers.

## SHERIDAN (rising)

The Bill I would have leave to introduce  
Is framed, sir, to repeal last Session's Act,  
By party-scribes intituled a Provision  
For this isle's Proper Guard; but elsewhere  
known

As Mr. Pitt's new Patent Parish Pill. (Laughter.)

The ministerial countenances, I mark,  
Congeal to dazed surprise at my straight  
motion —

Why, passes sane conjecture. It may be  
That with a haughty and unwavering faith  
In their own battering-rams of argument,



They deemed our buoyance whelmed, and  
sapped, and sunk  
To hope's sheer bottom, whence a miracle  
Was all could friend and float us ; or, maybe,  
They are amazed at our rude disrespect  
In making mockery of an English Law  
Sprung sacred from the King's own Premier's  
brain !

— I hear them snort ; but let them wince at  
will,

My duty must be done ; shall be done  
quickly

By citing some few facts.

An Act for our defence !

It weakens, not defends ; and oversea  
Swoln France's despot and his myrmidons  
This moment know it, and can jeer thereat.  
Our people know it too — those who can peer  
Behind the scenes of this poor painted show  
Called soldiering ! — The Act has failed, must  
fail,

As my right honourable friend well proved  
When speaking t'other night, whose silencing  
By his right honourable *vis-à-vis*  
Was of the genuine Governmental sort,  
And like the catamarans their sapience shaped  
All fizzle and no harm. (Laughter.) The Act,  
in brief,

Effects this much : that the whole force of  
England

Is strengthened by — eleven thousand men !

So sorted that the British infantry  
Are now eight hundred less than heretofore!

In Ireland, where the personal influence  
Of the right honourable gentleman  
Particularly prevails, *eleven* men  
Have been amassed. And in the Cinque-  
Port towns,  
Where he is held in absolute veneration,  
His method has so quickened martial fire  
As to bring in — one man. O would that man  
Might meet my sight! (Laughter.) A  
Hercules, no doubt,  
A god-like emanation from this Act,  
Who with his single arm will overthrow  
All Buonaparté's legions ere their keels  
Have scraped one pebble of our fortless  
shores! . . .

Such is my motion, sir, and such my mind.

[He sits down amid cheers.]

The candle-snuffers go round, and PITT rises. During the momentary pause before he speaks the House assumes an attentive stillness, in which can be heard the rustling of the trees without, a horn from an early coach, and the voice of the watch crying the hour.

PITT

Not one on this side but appreciates  
Those mental gems and airy pleasantries  
Flashed by the honourable gentleman,  
Who shines in them by birthright. Each  
device

Of drollery he has laboured to outshape,  
(Or treasured up from others who have  
shaped it,)

Displays that are the conjurings of the moment,  
(Or mellowed and matured by sleeping on) —  
Dry hoardings in his book of commonplace,  
Stored without stint of toil through days and  
months —

He heaps into one mass, and lights and fans  
As fuel for his flaming eloquence,  
Which is maintained without a thought or care  
If germane to the theme, or not at all.

Now vain indeed it were should I assay  
To match him in such sort. For, sir, alas,  
To use imagination as the ground  
Of chronicle, take myth and merry tale  
As texts for prophecy, is not my gift,  
Being but a person primed with simple fact,  
Unprinked by jewelled art. — But to the  
thing.

The preparations of the enemy,  
Doggedly bent to desolate our land,  
Advance with a sustained activity.  
They are seen, they are known, by you and  
by us all.

But they evince no clear-eyed tentative  
In furtherance of the threat, whose coming off,  
Ay, years may yet postpone; whereby the Act  
Will far outstrip him, and the thousands called  
Duly to join the ranks by its provisions,  
In process sure, if slow, will ratch the lines

Of English regiments — seasoned, cool, re-  
solved —

To glorious length and firm prepotency.

And why, then, should we dream of its repeal  
Ere profiting by its advantages?

Must the House listen to such wilding words  
As this proposal, at the very hour

When the Act's gearing finds its ordered  
grooves

And circles into full utility?

The motion of the honourable gentleman

Reminds me aptly of a publican

Who should, when malting, mixing, mashing's  
past,

Fermenting, barrelling, and spigoting,

Quick taste the brew, and shake his sapient  
head,

And cry in acid voice · The ale is new!

Brew old, you varlets; cast this slop away!

(Cheers.)

But gravely, sir, I would conclude to-  
night,

And, as a serious man on serious things,

I now speak here. . . . I pledge myself to this:

Unprecedented and magnificent

As were our strivings in the previous war,

Our efforts in the present shall transcend  
them,

As men will learn. Such efforts are not  
sized

By this light measuring-rule my critic here

Whips from his pocket like a clerk-o'-works!...  
Tasking and toilsome war's details must be,  
And toilsome, too, must be their criticism, —  
Not in a moment's stroke extemporized.

The strange fatality that haunts the times  
Wherein our lot is cast, has no example.

Times are they fraught with peril, trouble,  
gloom ;

We have to mark their lourings, and to face  
them.

Sir, reading thus the full significance  
Of these big days, large though my lackings be,  
Can any hold of those who know my past  
That I, of all men, slight our safeguarding ?  
No : by all honour no ! — Were I convinced  
That such could be the mind of members here,  
My sorrowing thereat would doubly shade  
The shade on England now ! So I do trust  
All in the House will take my tendered word,  
And credit my deliverance here to-night,  
That in this vital point of watch and ward  
Against the threatenings from yonder coast  
We stand prepared ; and under Providence  
Shall fend whatever hid or open stroke  
A foe may deal.

He sits down amid loud ministerial cheers, with  
symptoms of great exhaustion.

#### WINDHAM

The question that compels the House to-night  
Is not of differences 'twixt wit and wit,

But if for England it be well or no  
 To null the present Act, as one inept  
 For setting up with speed and hot effect  
 The red machinery of desperate war. —  
 Whatever it may do, or not, 'tis this,  
 A statesman's raw experiment. If ill,  
 Shall more experiments and more be tried  
 In face of jeopardy that makes demand  
 For sureness of proceeding? Must this  
 House

Exchange safe action based on practised lines  
 For yet more ventures into risks unknown  
 To gratify a quaint projector's whim,  
 While enemies hang grinning round our gates  
 To profit by mistake?

My friend who spoke  
 Found comedy in the matter. Comical  
 As it may be in parentage and feature,  
 Most grave and tragic in its consequence  
 This Act may prove. We are moving  
 thoughtlessly,

We squander precious, brief, life-saving time  
 On idle guess-games. Fail the measure must,  
 Nay, failed it has already; and should stir  
 Resolve in its progenitor himself  
 To move for its repeal! (Cheers.)

#### WHITBREAD

I rise but to subjoin a phrase or two  
 To those of my right honourable friend.

I, too, am one who reads the present danger  
As passing all our risks of heretofore.  
For why? Our bold and reckless enemy  
Relaxing not his plans, has gained him time  
To mass his monstrous force on all the coigns  
From which our coast is most assailable.  
Ay, even afloat his concentrations work :  
Two vast united squadrons of his sail  
Move at this moment viewless on the seas. —  
Their whereabouts, untraced, unguessable,  
Will not be known to us till some black blow  
Be struck by them in some undreamt-of  
quarter  
To end our rule.  
That we are reasonably secured therefrom  
By such an Act is but a madman's dream.  
A commonwealth so situate cries aloud  
For more, far greater, measures! End an  
Act  
In Heaven's name, then, which only can  
obstruct  
The adumbration of a sounder plan  
For building up an army. (Cheers.)

## BATHURST

Sir, the point  
To any sober mind is bright as noon ;  
Whether the Act should have befitting trial  
Or be condemned at sight. I firmly hold  
The latter rank iniquity. — One task

Is theirs who would inter this corpse-cold Act—  
(So deemed) — to bring to light a substitute.  
Sir, they have none; they have given no  
thought to one,

And thus their deeds incautiously disclose  
Their cloaked intention and most secret aim.  
With them the question is not how to frame  
A finer scheme to trounce intrusive foes,  
But who shall be the future ministers  
To whom such scheme against intrusive foes,  
Whatever it may prove, shall be entrusted!  
They even ask the country gentlemen  
To join them in this plot. But, God be  
praised,

Those gentlemen are sound, and of repute;  
Their names, their property, their character,  
Their numbers, their attainments, and their  
blood, (Ironical Opposition cheers.)

Safeguard them from an onslaught on an Act  
For ends so sinister and palpable! (Cheers.)

#### FULLER

I disapprove of censures of this Act. —  
All who can entertain such hostile thought  
Would swear that black is white, that night  
is day.

No honest man will join a reckless crew  
Who'd overthrow their country for their gain!  
(Laughter.)



## TIERNEY

It is incumbent on me to declare  
In the last speaker's face my censure, based  
On grounds distinct and constitutional. —  
An Act it is that labours to create  
A standing army, large and permanent ;  
Which kind of force has ever been beheld  
With jealous-eyed disfavour in this House.  
It makes for sure oppression, binding men  
To serve for less than service proves it worth  
Conditioned by no hampering penalty.  
For these and late-spoke reasons, then, I say,  
Let not the Act deface the statute-book,  
But blot it out forthwith. (Hear, hear.)

Fox (rising amid cheers)

At this late hour,  
After the riddling fire the Act has drawn on't,  
My words shall hold the House the briefest  
while.

Too obvious to the most unwilling mind  
It grows that the existence of this law  
Experience and reflection have condemned.  
Professing to do much, it makes for nothing ;  
Vouched as assuring all, it comforts none.  
Not only so ; while feeble in effect  
It shows it vicious in its principle.  
Engaging to raise men for the common weal,  
It sets a harmful and unequal tax

Capriciously on our communities. —  
The annals of a century, sir, unshow  
More flagrant cases of oppressiveness  
Than those this statute works to perpetrate,  
Which (like all Bills this favoured statesman  
frames,  
And clothes with tapestries of rhetoric  
Disguising their real web of commonplace)  
Though held as shaped for English bul-  
warking,  
Breathes in its heart the perverse schemes  
of party,  
And instincts toward oligarchic power,  
Galling the many to relieve the few! (Cheers.)  
Whatever breadth and sense of equity  
Inform the methods of this minister,  
Those qualities nigh always trace their root  
To measures that his predecessors wrought.  
And ere his Government can dare assert  
Superior claims to England's confidence,  
They owe it to their honour and good name  
To furnish better proof of such a claim  
Than is revealed by the abortiveness  
Of this thing called an Act for our Defence.  
To the great gifts of its artificer  
No member of this House is more disposed  
To yield full recognition than am I.  
No man has found more reason so to do  
Through the long roll of disputatious years  
Wherein we have stood opposed. . . .  
But if one single fact could counsel me

To entertain a doubt of those great gifts,  
 And cancel faith in his capacity,  
 That fact would be the vast imprudence shown  
 In staking recklessly repute like his  
 On such an Act as he has offered us —  
 So false in principle, so poor in fruit.  
 Sir, the achievements and effects thereof  
 Have furnished not one fragile argument  
 Which all the partiality of friendship  
 Can kindle to consider as the mark  
 Of a clear, vigorous, freedom-fostering mind !

He sits down amid cheers from the Opposition.

#### SHERIDAN

My summary shall be brief, and to the point. —  
 The said right honourable Prime Minister  
 Has thought it proper to declare my speech  
 The jesting of an irresponsible ; —  
 Words from a person who has never read  
 The Act he claims him urgent to repeal.  
 Such quips and quizzings (as he reckons  
 them)  
 He implicates as gathered from long hoards  
 Stored up with cruel care, to be discharged  
 With sudden blaze of pyrotechnic art  
 On the devoted, gentle, shrinking head  
 Of the right honourable gentleman. (Laughter.)  
 But were my humble, solemn, sad oration  
 (Laughter.)  
 Indeed such rattle as he rated it,

Is it not strange and passing precedent  
That the illustrious chief of Government  
Should have uprisen with such indecent speed  
And strenuously replied? He, sir, knows  
well

That vast and luminous talents like to his  
Could not have been demanded to choke off  
A verbiage marked by nothing more of weight  
Than ignorant irregularity!

*Nec Deus intersit* — and so and so —  
Is a well-worn citation whose close fit  
None will perceive more clearly in this Fane  
Than its presiding Deity opposite. (Laughter.)  
His thunderous answer thus perforce con-  
demns him!

Moreover, to top all, the while replying,  
He still thought best to leave intact the  
reasons

On which my blame was founded!

Thus, then, stands  
My motion unimpaired, convicting clearly  
Of dire perversion that capacity  
We formerly admired.— (Cries of “Oh, oh.”)

This minister  
Whose circumventions never circumvent,  
Whose coalitions fail to coalesce;  
This dab at secret treaties known to all,  
This darling of the aristocracy —

(Laughter, “Oh, oh,” cheers, and cries of “Divide.”)

Has brought the millions to the verge of ruin,

By pledging them to Continental quarrels  
Of which we see no end! (Cheers.)

The members rise to divide.<sup>1</sup>

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*It irks me that they thus should Yea and Nay,  
As though a power lay in their oraclings,  
If each decision work unconsciously,  
And would be operant though unloosened were  
A single lip!*

#### SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*There may react on things  
Some influence from these, indefinitely,  
And even on That, whose outcome we all are.*

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hypotheses! — More boots it to remind  
The younger here of our ethereal band  
And hierarchy of Intelligences,  
That this thwart Parliament whose moods we  
watch —  
So insular, empiric, un-ideal —  
May figure forth in sharp and salient lines  
To retrospective eyes of afterdays,*

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<sup>1</sup> The foregoing is an attempt to give the substance of the memorable debate which took place on the evening represented; but reports differ in some particulars.

*And print its legend large on History.  
 For one cause—if I read the signs aright—  
 To-night's appearance of its Minister  
 In the assembly of his long-time sway  
 Is near his last, and themes to-night launched forth  
 Will take a tincture from that memory,  
 When men recall the scene and circumstance  
 That hung about his pleadings.—But no more;  
 The ritual of each party is rehearsed,  
 Dislodging not one vote or prejudice;  
 The ministers their ministries retain,  
 And Ins as Ins, and Outs as Outs, remain.*

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Meanwhile what of the Foeman's vast array  
 That wakes these tones?*

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Abide the event, young Shade:  
 Soon stars will shut and show a spring-eyed dawn,  
 And sunbeams fountain forth, that will arouse  
 Those forming bands to full activity.*

An honourable member reports that he spies strangers.

*A timely token that we dally here!  
 We now cast off these mortal manacles,  
 And speed us seaward.*

The four Phantoms vanish from the Gallery. The members file out to the lobbies. The House and Westminster recede into the films of night, and the point of observation shifts rapidly across the Channel.

## SCENE IV

## THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

A morning radiant with early sunlight. The French Army of Invasion is disclosed. On the hills on either side of the town and behind appear large military camps formed of timber huts. Lower down are other camps of more or less permanent kind, the whole affording accommodation for one hundred and fifty thousand men.

South of the town is an extensive basin surrounded by quays, the heaps of fresh soil around showing it to be a recent excavation from the banks of the Liane. The basin is crowded with the flotilla, consisting of hundreds of vessels of sundry kinds: flat-bottomed brigs with guns and two masts; boats of one mast, carrying each an artillery waggon, two guns, and a two-stalled horse-box; transports with three low masts; and long narrow pinnaces arranged for many oars.

Timber, saw-mills, and new-cut planks spread in profusion around, and many of the town residences are seen to be adapted for warehouses and infirmaries.

## DUMB SHOW

Moving in this scene are countless companies of soldiery, engaged in a drill-practice of embarking and disembarking, and of hoisting horses into the vessels and landing them again. Vehicles bearing provisions of many sorts load and unload before the temporary warehouses. Further off, on the open land, bodies of troops are at field-drill. Other bodies of soldiers, half stripped and encrusted with mud, are labouring as navvies in repairing the excavations.

An English squadron of about twenty sail, comprising

a ship or two of the line, frigates, brigs, and luggers, confronts the busy spectacle from the sea.

The Show presently dims, and anon a curtain of cloud closes over it.

## SCENE V

LONDON. THE HOUSE OF A LADY OF QUALITY

A fashionable crowd is present at an evening party, which includes the DUKES of BEAUFORT and RUTLAND, LORDS MALMESBURY, HARROWBY, ELDON, GRENVILLE, CASTLEREAGH, SIDMOUTH, and MULGRAVE, with their ladies; also CANNING, PERCIVAL, TOWNSHEND, LADY ANNE HAMILTON, MRS. DAMER, LADY CAROLINE LAMB, and many other notables.

A GENTLEMAN (offering his snuff-box)

So, then, the Treaty anxiously concerted  
Between ourselves and frosty Muscovy  
Is duly signed?

A CABINET MINISTER

Was signed a few days back,  
And is in force. And we do firmly hope  
The loud pretensions and the stunning dins  
From new aggressiveness by France's chief,  
Now daily heard, these laudable exertions  
May keep in curb; that ere our greening land  
Darken its leaves beneath the Dogday suns,  
The independence of the Continent  
May be assured, and all the rumpled flags



Of famous dynasties so rudely mauled,  
Extend their honoured hues as heretofore.

GENTLEMAN

So be it. Yet this man is a volcano;  
And proven 'tis, by God, volcanoes choked  
Have ere now turned to earthquakes!

A lady comes up and playfully taps his arm.

LADY

What's the news? —  
The chequerboard of diplomatic moves  
Is London, all the world knows: here are  
born  
All inspirations of the Continent —  
So tell!

GENTLEMAN

Ay. Inspirations now abound!

LADY

Nay, but your looks are grave! That  
measured speech  
Betokened matter that will waken us. —  
Is it some piquant cruelty of his?  
Or other tickling horror from abroad  
The packet has brought in?

GENTLEMAN

The treaty's signed!

## MINISTER

Whereby the parties mutually agree  
 To knit in union and in general league  
 All outraged Europe.

## LADY

Such knitting close sounds well ;  
 But how ensure its not unravelling ?

## MINISTER

Well ; by the terms. There are among  
 them these :

Five hundred thousand active men in arms  
 Shall strike (supported by Britannic aid  
 In vessels, men, and money subsidies)  
 To free North Germany and Hanover  
 From trampling foes ; deliver Switzerland,  
 Unbind the galled republic of the Dutch,  
 Rethrone in Piedmont the Sardinian King,  
 Make Naples sword-proof, un-French Italy  
 From shore to shore ; and thoroughly  
 guarantee

A settled order to the divers states ;  
 Thus rearing breachless barriers in each realm  
 Against the thrust of his usurping hand.

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*They trow not what is shaping otherwhere  
 The while they talk thus stoutly !*

## SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

*Bid me go*

*And join them, and all blandly kindle them  
By bringing, ere material transit can,  
A new surprise?*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Yea, for a moment, wouldst.*

The Spirit of Rumour enters the apartment in the form of a personage of fashion, newly arrived. He advances and addresses the group.

## SPIRIT

*The Treaty moves all tongues to-night.— Ha,  
well—  
So much on paper!*

## GENTLEMAN

What on land and sea?  
You look, old friend, full primed with latest  
thence.

## SPIRIT

*Yea, this. The Italy our mighty pact  
Delivers from the French and Bonaparte  
Makes haste to crown him!—turning from  
Boulogne  
He speeds toward Milan, there to glory him*

*In second coronation by the Pope,  
And set upon his irrepressible brow  
Lombardy's iron crown.*

The Spirit of Rumour mingles with the throng,  
moves away, and disappears.

LADY

Fair Italy,

Alas, alas!

LORD

Yet thereby English folk  
Are freed him. — Faith, as ancient people say,  
It's an ill wind that blows good luck to none!

MINISTER

Who is your friend that drops so airily  
This precious pinch of salt on our raw skin?

GENTLEMAN

Why, Norton. You know Norton well  
enough.

MINISTER

Nay, 'twas not he. Norton of course I know.  
I thought him Stewart for a moment, but ——

LADY

But I well scanned him — 'twas Lord Aber-  
corn;  
For, said I to myself, "O quaint old beau,

To sleep in black silk sheets so funnily" —  
That is, if the town rumour on't be true.

LORD

My wig, ma'am, no! 'Twas a much younger  
man.

GENTLEMAN

But let me call him! Monstrous silly this,  
That I don't know my friends!

They look around. The gentleman goes among the  
surging and babbling guests, makes inquiries, and returns  
with a perplexed look.

GENTLEMAN

They tell me, sure,  
That he's not here to-night!

MINISTER

I can well swear  
It was not Norton. — 'Twas some lively buck,  
Who chose to put himself in masquerade  
And enter for a whim. I'll tell our host.  
Meantime the absurdity of his report  
Is more than manifested. How knows he  
The plans of Bonaparte by lightning-flight,  
Before another man in England knows!

## LADY

Something uncanny's in it all, if true.  
Good Lord, the thought gives me a sudden  
sweat,  
That fairly makes my linen stick to me!

## MINISTER

Ha-ha! 'Tis excellent. But we'll find out  
Who this impostor was.

They disperse, look furtively for the stranger, and speak  
of the incident to others of the crowded company.

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Now let us vision onward, till we sight  
Famed Milan's aisles of marble, sun-alight  
And there behold, unbid, the Coronation-rite.*

The confused tongues of the assembly waste away into  
distance, till they are heard but as the ripples of the sea  
from a high cliff, the scene becoming small and indistinct  
therewith. This passes into silence, and the whole  
disappears.

## SCENE VI

## MILAN. THE CATHEDRAL

The interior of the building on a sunny May day.  
The walls, arches, and columns are draped in silk  
fringed with gold. A gilded throne stands in front of  
the High Altar. A closely packed assemblage, in every  
variety of rich costume, waits in breathless expectation.

## DUMB SHOW

From a private corridor leading to a door in the aisle the EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE enters, in a shining costume, and diamonds that collect rainbow-colours from the sunlight piercing the clerestory windows. She is preceded by PRINCESS ELIZA, and surrounded by her ladies. A pause follows, and then comes the procession of the EMPEROR, consisting of hussars, heralds, pages, aides-de-camp, presidents of institutions, officers of state bearing the insignia of the Empire and of Italy, and seven ladies with offerings. The EMPEROR himself is in royal robes, wearing the Imperial crown, and carrying the sceptre. He is followed by ministers and officials of the household. His gait is rather defiant than dignified, and a bluish pallor overspreads his face.

He is met by the Cardinal Archbishop CAPRARA and the clergy, who burn incense before him as he proceeds towards the throne. Rolling notes of music burst forth, and loud applause from the congregation.

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*What is the creed that these rich rites disclose?*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*A local thing called Christianity,  
Which the wild dramas of this wheeling sphere  
Include, with divers other such, in dim,  
Pathetical, and brief parentheses;  
Beyond whose reach, uninfluenced, unconcerned,  
The systems of the suns go sweeping on  
With all their many-mortaled planet train  
In mathematic roll unceasingly.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I did not recognize it here, forsooth ;  
Though in its early, lovingkindly days  
Of gracious purpose it was much to me.*

ARCHBISHOP (addressing BONAPARTE)

Sire, with that clemency and right good-  
will  
Which beautify Imperial Majesty,  
You deigned acceptance of the homages  
That we the clergy and the Milanese  
Were proud to offer when your entrance  
here  
Streamed radiance on our ancient capital.  
Please, then, to consummate the boon to-day  
Beneath this holy roof, so soon to thrill  
With solemn strains and lifting harmonies  
Befitting such a coronation hour ;  
And bend a tender fatherly regard  
On this assembly, now at one with me  
To supplicate the Author of All Good  
That He endow your most Imperial person  
With every Heavenly gift.

The procession advances, and the EMPEROR seats himself on the throne, with the banners and regalia of the Empire on his right, and those of Italy on his left hand. Shouts and triumphal music accompany the proceedings, after which Divine service commences.



## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Thus are the self-styled servants of the Highest  
Constrained by earthly duress to embrace  
Mighty imperiousness as it were choice,  
And hand the Italian sceptre unto one  
Who, with a saturnine, sour-humoured grin,  
Professed at first to flout antiquity,  
Scorn limp conventions, smile at mouldy thrones,  
And level dynasts down to journeymen! —  
Yet he, advancing swiftly on that track  
Whereby his active soul, fair Freedom's child,  
Makes strange decline, now labours to achieve  
The thing it overthrew.*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Thou reasonest ever thuswise—even as if  
A self-formed force had urged his loud career.*

## SPIRIT SINISTER

*Do not the prelate's accents falter thin,  
His lips with inheld laughter grow deformed,  
While blessing one whose aim is but to win  
The golden seats that other b——s have warmed?*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Soft, jester; scorn not puppetry so skilled,  
Even made to feel by one men called the Dame.*

## SHADE OF THE EARTH

*Yea ; that they feel, and puppetry remain,  
Is an owned flaw in her consistency  
Men love to dub Dame Nature — that lay-shape  
They use to hang phenomena upon —  
Whose deftest mothering in fairest spheres  
Is girt about by terms inexorable !*

## SPIRIT SINISTER

*The lady's remark is apposite, and reminds me that I may as well hold my tongue as desired. For if my casual scorn, Father Years, should set thee trying to prove that there is any rhyme or reason in the Universe, thou wilt not accomplish it by Doomsday ! Small blame to her, however ; she must cut her coat according to her cloth, as they say down below there.*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*O would that I could move It to enchain thee,  
And shut thee up a thousand years ! — (to cite  
A grim terrestrial tale of one thy like)  
Thou Iago of the Incorporal World,  
"As they would say below there."*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Would thou couldst !  
But move That scoped above percipience, Sire,  
It cannot be !*

## SHADE OF THE EARTH

*The spectacle proceeds.*

## SPIRIT SINISTER

*And we may as well give all attention thereto, for what is doing in other continents is not worth eyesight. Our meanest deputies can take note of the dull show of evils going on there.*

The ceremonial in the Cathedral continues. NAPOLÉON goes to the front of the altar, ascends the steps, and, taking up the crown of Lombardy, places it on his head.

## NAPOLÉON

'Tis God has given it to me. So be it.  
Let any who shall touch it now beware!

(Reverberations of applause.)

The Sacrament of the Mass. NAPOLÉON reads the Coronation Oath in a loud voice.

## HERALDS

Give ear! Napoléon, Emperor of the French  
And King of Italy, is crowned and throned!

## CONGREGATION

Long live the Emperor and King. Huzza!

Music. The Te Deum.

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*That vulgar stroke of vauntery he displayed  
In planting on his brow the Lombard crown,  
Means sheer erasure of the Luneville pacts,  
And lets confusion loose on Europe's peace  
For many an undawned year! From this rash  
hour*

*Austria but waits her opportunity  
By secret swellings of her armaments  
To link her to his foes. — I'll speak to him.*

He throws a whisper into NAPOLÉON's ear.

*Lieutenant Bonaparte,  
Would it not seemlier be to shut thy heart  
To these unhealthy splendours? — render thee  
To whom thou swarest first, fair Liberty?*

NAPOLÉON

Who spoke to me?

ARCHBISHOP

Not I, Sire. Not a soul.

NAPOLÉON

Dear Joséphine, my queen, didst call my  
name?

JOSÉPHINE

I spoke not, Sire.

## NAPOLÉON

Thou didst not, tender spouse ;  
I know it. Such harsh utterance was not  
thine.

'Twas but aggressive Fancy working spells  
Upon a mind o'erwrought !

The service closes. The clergy advance with the  
canopy to the foot of the throne, and the procession  
forms to return to the Palace.

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Officious sprite,  
Thou'rt young, and dost not heed the Cause of  
things  
Which some of us have inkled to thee here ;  
Else wouldst thou not have hailed the Emperor,  
Whose acts do but outshape Its governing.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*I feel, Sire, as I must ! This tale of Will  
And Life's impulsion by Incognizance  
I cannot take.*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Let me then once again  
Show to thy sceptic eye the very streams  
And currents of this all-inhering Power,  
And bring conclusion to thy unbelief.*

The scene assumes the preternatural transparency before mentioned, and there is again beheld as it were the interior of a brain which seems to manifest the volitions of an Universal Will, of whose tissues the personages of the action form portion.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Enough. And yet for very sorriness  
I cannot own the weird phantasma real!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Affection ever was illogical.*

SPIRIT IRONIC (aside)

*How should the Sprite own to such logic —  
a mere juvenile — who only came into being in  
what the earthlings call their Tertiary Age!*

The scene changes. The exterior of the Cathedral takes the place of the interior, and the point of view recedes, the whole fabric smalling into distance and becoming like a rare, delicately carved alabaster ornament. The city itself sinks to miniature, the Alps show afar as a white corrugation, the Adriatic and the Gulf of Genoa appear on this and that hand, with Italy between them, till clouds cover the panorama.

## ACT SECOND

### SCENE I

#### THE DOCKYARD, GIBRALTAR

The Rock is seen rising behind the town and the Alameda Gardens, and the English fleet rides at anchor in the Bay, across which the Spanish shore from Algeciras to Carnero Point shuts in the West. Southward over the Strait is the African coast.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Our migratory Proskenion now presents  
An outlook on the storied Kalpe Rock,  
As preface to the vision of the Fleets  
Spanish and French, linked for fell purposings.*

#### RECORDING ANGEL (reciting)

*Their motions and manœuvres, since the fame  
Of Bonaparte's enthronement at Milan  
Swept swift through Europe's dumb'd com-  
munities,  
Have stretched the English mind to wide  
surmise.  
Many well-based alarms (which strange report*

*Much aggravates) as to the pondered blow,  
Flutter the public pulse; all points in turn —  
Malta, Brazil, Wales, Ireland, British Ind —  
Being held as feasible for force like theirs,  
Of lavish numbers and unrecking aim.*

*“Where, where is Nelson?” questions every  
tongue; —*

*“How views he so unparalleled a scheme?”  
Their slow uncertain apprehensions ask.*

*“When Villeneuve puts to sea with all his force,  
What may he not achieve, if swift his course!”*

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I'll call in Nelson, who has stepped ashore  
For the first time these thrice twelvemonths and  
more,  
And with him one whose insight has alone  
Pierced the real project of Napoléon.*

Enter NELSON and COLLINGWOOD, who pace up and down.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Note Nelson's worn-out features. Much has he  
Suffered from labour and anxiety!*

#### NELSON

In short, dear Coll, the letter which you wrote  
me

Had so much pith that I was fain to see you;  
For I am sure that you indeed divine



The true intent and compass of a plot  
Which I have spelled in vain.

## COLLINGWOOD

I weighed it thus :  
Their flight to th' Indies being to draw us off,  
That and no more, and clear these coasts of  
us —

The standing obstacle to his device —  
He cared not what was done at Martinique,  
Or where, provided that the general end  
Should not be jeopardized — that is to say,  
The full-united squadron's quick return. —  
Gravina and Villeneuve, once back to Europe,  
Can straight make Ferrol, raise there the  
blockade,

Then haste to Brest, there to relieve Gan-  
teaume,

And next with four- or five-and-fifty sail  
Bear down upon our coast as they see fit. —  
I read they aim to strike at Ireland still,  
As formerly, and as I wrote to you.

## NELSON

So far your thoughtful and sagacious words  
Have hit the facts. But 'tis no Irish bay  
The villains aim to drop their anchors in ;  
My word for it: they make the Wessex  
shore,

And this vast squadron handled by Villeneuve

Is meant to cloak the passage of their  
strength,  
Massed in those transports — we being kept  
elsewhere  
By feigning forces. — Good God, Colling-  
wood,  
I must be gone! Yet two more days remain  
Ere I can get away. — I must be gone!

## COLLINGWOOD

Wherever you may go to, my dear lord,  
You carry victory with you. Let them  
launch,  
Your name will blow them back, as sou'-  
west gales  
The gulls that beat against them from the  
shore.

## NELSON

Good Collingwood, I know you trust in me;  
But ships are ships, and do not kindly come  
Out of the slow docks of the Admiralty  
Like wharfside pigeons when they are  
whistled for:—  
And there's a damned disparity of force,  
Which means tough work awhile for you  
and me!

The Spirit of the Years whispers to NELSON.

And I have warnings, warnings, Collingwood,  
That my effective hours are shortening here;

Strange warnings now and then, as 'twere  
 within me,  
 Which, though I fear them not, I recog-  
 nize! . . .

However, by God's help, I'll live to meet  
 These foreign boasters; yea, I'll finish them;  
 And then — well, Gunner Death may finish  
 me!

COLLINGWOOD

View not your life so gloomily, my lord:  
 'Tis charmed, a needed purpose to fulfil!

NELSON

Ah, Coll. Lead bullets are not all that  
 wound. . . .

I have a feeling here of dying fires,  
 A sense of much and deep unworded censure,  
 Which, compassing about my private life,  
 Makes all my public service lustreless  
 In my own eyes. — I fear I am much con-  
 demned

For those dear Naples and Palermo days,  
 And her who was the sunshine of them  
 all! . . .

He who is with himself dissatisfied,  
 Though all the world find satisfaction in him,  
 Is like a rainbow-coloured bird gone blind,  
 That gives delight it shares not. Happiness?  
 It's the philosopher's stone no alchemy

Shall light on in this world I am weary of. —  
Smiling I'd pass to my long home to-morrow  
Could I with honour, and my country's gain.  
But let's adjourn. I waste your hours ashore  
By such ill-timed confessions!

They pass out of sight, and the scene closes.

## SCENE II

### OFF FERROL

The French and Spanish combined squadrons. On board the French admiral's flag-ship. VILLENEUVE is discovered in his cabin, writing a letter.

### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*He pens in fits, with pallid restlessness,  
Like one who sees misfortune stalk the wave,  
And can nor face nor flee it.*

### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*He indites  
To his long friend the minister Decrès  
Words that go heavily! . . .*

### VILLENEUVE (writing)

“ I am made the arbiter in vast designs  
Whereof I see black outcomes. Do I this  
Or do I that, success, that loves to jilt  
Her anxious wooer for some careless blade,

Will not reward me. For, if I must pen it,  
Demoralized past prayer is the marine —  
Bad masts, bad sails, bad officers, bad men ;  
We cling to naval technics long outworn,  
And time and opportunity do not avail me  
To take up new. I have long suspected such,  
But till I saw my helps, the Spanish ships,  
I hoped somewhat.— Brest is my nominal port ;  
Yet if so, Calder will again attack —  
Now reinforced by Nelson or Cornwallis —  
And shatter my whole fleet. . . . Shall I admit  
That my true inclination and desire  
Is to make Cadiz straightway, and not Brest ?  
Alas ! thereby I fail the Emperor ;  
But shame the navy less. —

Your friend, VILLENEUVE.”

GENERAL LAURISTON enters.

### LAURISTON

Admiral, my missive to the Emperor,  
Which I shall speed by special courier  
From Ferrol this near eve, runs thus, and  
thus : —

“ Gravina’s ships, in Ferrol here at hand,  
Embayed but by a temporary wind,  
Are all we now await. Combined with these  
We sail herefrom to Brest ; there promptly  
give  
Cornwallis battle, and release Ganteaume ;  
Thence, all united, bearing Channelwards ;

A step that sets in motion the first wheel  
 In the proud project of your Majesty  
 Now to be engined to the very close,  
 To wit: that a French fleet shall enter in  
 And hold the Channel four-and-twenty  
 hours."—

Such clear assurance to the Emperor  
 That our intent is modelled on his will  
 I hasten to dispatch to him forthwith.<sup>1</sup>

#### VILLENEUVE

Yes, Lauriston. I sign to every word.

LAURISTON goes out. VILLENEUVE remains at his  
 table in reverie.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*We may impress him under visible shapes  
 That seem to shed a silent-circling doom;  
 He's such an one as can be so impressed,  
 And this much is among our privileges,  
 Well bounded as they be.—Let us draw near  
 him.*

The Spirits of the Years and of the Pities take the form of white sea-birds, which alight on the stern-balcony of VILLENEUVE's ship, immediately outside his cabin window. VILLENEUVE after a while lifts his eyes and sees the birds.

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<sup>1</sup> Through this tangle of intentions the writer has in the main followed Thiers, whose access to documents would seem to authenticate his details of the famous scheme for England's ruin.

## VILLENEUVE

My apprehensions even outstep their cause,  
As though some influence smote through  
yonder pane.

A pause.

— Why dared I not disclose to him my  
thought,

As nightly worded by the whistling shrouds,  
That Brest will never see our battled hulls  
Helming to north in pomp of cannonry  
To take the lead in this red pilgrimage!

— If so it were, now, that I'd screen my skin  
From risks of bloody business in the brunt,  
My acts could scarcely wear a difference.  
Yet I would die to-morrow — not ungladly —  
So far removed is carcase-care from me.

'Tis for no self these apprehensions spring,  
But for the cause. — Yes, rotten is our marine,  
Which, while I know, the Emperor knows not,  
And the pale secret chills. Though some  
there be

Would beard contingencies and buffet all,  
I'll not command a course so conscienceless.  
Rather I'll stand, and face Napoléon's rage  
When he shall learn what mean the ambiguous  
lines

That facts have forced from me.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit of  
the Years)

*O Eldest-born of the Unconscious Cause —  
If such thou beest, as I can fancy thee —  
Why dost thou rack him thus? Consistency  
Might be preserved, and yet his doom remain.  
His olden courage is without reproach;  
'Tis but his temper to be gaingiving.*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I say as I have said long heretofore,  
I know but narrow freedom. Feel'st thou not  
We are in Its hand, as he? — Here, as elsewhere,  
We do but as we may; no further dare.*

The birds disappear, and the scene closes.

SCENE III

THE CAMP AND HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

The English coast in the distance. Near the Tour d'Ordre stands a hut, with sentinels and aides outside, NAPOLÉON's temporary lodging when not at his headquarters at the Château of Pont-de-Briques, two miles inland.

DUMB SHOW

A courier arrives with dispatches, and enters the Emperor's quarters, whence he emerges and goes on with other dispatches to the hut of DECRÈS, lower down. NAPOLÉON comes out from his hut with a paper



in his hand, and musingly proceeds towards an eminence commanding the sea.

Along the shore below are forming in a far-reaching line more than a hundred thousand infantry. On the downs in the rear of the camps fifteen thousand cavalry are manœuvring, their accoutrements flashing in the sun like a school of mackerel. The flotilla lies in and around the port, alive with moving figures.

With his head forward and his hands behind him the Emperor surveys these animated proceedings in detail, but more frequently turns his face towards the telegraph on the cliff to the south-west, erected to signal when VILLENEUVE and the combined squadrons shall be visible on the west horizon.

He summons one of the aides, who descends to the hut of DECRÈS. DECRÈS comes out from his hut, and hastens to join the Emperor. Dumb show ends.

NAPOLÉON and DECRÈS advance to the foreground  
of the scene.

### NAPOLÉON

Decrès, this action with Sir Robert Calder  
Three weeks ago, whereof we dimly heard,  
And clear details of which I have just unsealed,  
Is on the whole auspicious for our plan.

It seems that twenty of our ships and  
Spain's —

None over eighty-gunned, and some far less —  
Engaged the English off Cape Finisterre  
With fifteen vessels of a hundred each.

We coolly fought and orderly as they,  
And, but for mist, we had closed with victory.  
Two English were much hit, some Spanish  
damaged,

And Calder then drew off with his two wrecks  
And Spain's in tow, we giving chase forthwith.  
Not overtaking him our admiral,  
Having the coast clear for his purposes,  
Entered Coruña, and found orders there  
To open the port of Brest and come on hither.  
Thus hastes the moment when the double fleet  
Of Villeneuve and of Ganteaume should  
appear.

He looks again towards the telegraph.

DECRÈS (with hesitation)

And should they not appear, your Majesty?

NAPOLÉON

Not? But they will; and do it early, too!  
There's nothing hinders them. My God,  
they must,  
For I have much before me when this stroke  
At England's dealt. I learn from Talleyrand  
That Austrian preparations threaten hot,  
While Russia's hostile schemes are ripening,  
And shortly must be met. — My plan is fixed:  
I am prepared for each alternative.  
If Villeneuve come, I brave the British coast,  
Convulse the land with fear ('tis even now  
So far distraught that generals cast about  
To find new modes of warfare; yea, design  
Carriages to transport their infantry!). —

Once on the English soil I hold it firm,  
 Descend on London, and the while my men  
 Salute the dome of Paul's I cut the knot  
 Of all Pitt's coalitions ; setting free  
 From bondage to a cold manorial caste  
 A people who await it.

They stand and regard the chalky cliffs of England,  
 till NAPOLÉON resumes :

Should it be  
 Even that my admirals fail to keep the  
 tryst —  
 A thing scarce thinkable, when all's re-  
 viewed —  
 I strike this seaside camp, cross Germany,  
 With these two hundred thousand seasoned  
 men,  
 And pause not till within Vienna's walls  
 I cry checkmate. Next, Venice, too, being  
 taken,  
 And Austria's other holdings down that way,  
 The Bourbons also driven from Italy,  
 I strike at Russia — each in turn, you note,  
 Ere they can act conjoined.

Report to me  
 What has been scanned to-day upon the main,  
 And on your passage down request them  
 there  
 To send Daru this way.

DECRÈS (as he withdraws)

The Emperor can be sanguine. Scarce can I.  
His letters are more promising than mine.  
Alas, alas, Villeneuve, my dear old friend,  
Why do you pen me this at such a time!

[He retires reading a letter.

The Emperor walks up and down till DARU, his private secretary, joins him.

NAPOLÉON

Come quick, Daru; sit down upon the grass,  
And write whilst I am in mind.

First to Villeneuve:—

“I trust, vice-admiral, that before this date  
Your fleet has opened Brest, and gone. If not  
These lines will reach you there. But pause  
not, pray:

Waste not a moment dallying. Sail away:  
Once bring my coupled squadrons Channel-  
wards

And England's soil is ours. All's ready here,  
The troops alert, and every store embarked.  
Hold the nigh sea but four-and-twenty hours  
And our vast end is gained.”

Now to Ganteaume:—

“My telegraphs will have made known to you  
My object and desire to be but this,  
That you forbid Villeneuve to lose an hour  
In getting fit and putting forth to sea,

To profit by the fifty first-rate craft  
Wherewith I now am bettered. Quickly  
weigh,  
And steer you for the Channel with all your  
strength.

I count upon your well-known character,  
Your enterprize, your vigour, to do this.  
Sail hither, then; and we will be avenged  
For centuries of despite and contumely."

DARU

Shall a fair transcript, Sire, be made forthwith?

NAPOLÉON

This moment. And the courier will depart  
And travel without pause.

DARU goes to his office a little lower down, and the  
Emperor lingers on the cliffs looking through his glass.

The point of view shifts across the Channel, the  
Boulogne cliffs sinking behind the water-line.

## SCENE IV

SOUTH WESSEX. AN OPEN DOWN NEAR  
THE COAST

A wide view over the English Channel in front, in-  
cluding the Isle of Slings and its roadstead, where  
men-of-war and frigates are anchored. The hour is ten  
in the morning, and the sun glows upon a large military  
encampment round about the foreground, and warms the  
stone field-walls that take the place of hedges here.

Artillery, cavalry, and infantry, English and Hanoverian, are drawn up for review under the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND and officers of the staff, forming a vast military array, which extends three miles, and as far as the downs are visible.

In the centre by the Royal Standard appears KING GEORGE on horseback, and his suite. In a coach drawn by six cream-coloured Hanoverian horses QUEEN CHARLOTTE sits with three Princesses; in another carriage with four horses are two more Princesses. There are also present with the Royal Party the LORD CHANCELLOR, LORD MULGRAVE, COUNT MUNSTER, and many other luminaries of fashion and influence.

The Review proceeds in dumb show; and the din of many bands mingles with the cheers. The turf behind the saluting-point is crowded with carriages and spectators on foot.

### A SPECTATOR

And you've come to see the sight, like the King and myself? Well, one fool makes many. What a mampus o' folk it is here to-day! And what a time we do live in, between wars and wassailings, the ghost o' Boney, and King George in flesh and blood!

### SECOND SPECTATOR

Yes. I wonder King George is let venture down on this coast, where he might be snapped up in a moment like a minnow by a her'n, so near as we be to the field of Boney's vagaries! Begad, he's as like to land here as anywhere. Gloucester Lodge could be surrounded, and

George and Charlotte carried off before he could put on his hat, or she her red cloak and pattens.

### THIRD SPECTATOR

'Twould be no such joke to kidnap 'em as you think. Look at the frigates down there. Every night they are drawn up in a line across the mouth of the Bay, almost touching each other; and ashore a double line of sentinels, well primed with beer and ammunition, one at the water's edge, and the other on the Esplanade, stretch along the whole front. Then close to the Lodge a guard is mounted after eight o'clock; there be pickets on all the hills; at the Harbour mouth is a battery of twenty four-pounders; and over-right 'em a dozen six-pounders, and several howitzers. And next look at the size of the camp of horse and foot up here.

### FIRST SPECTATOR

Everybody however was fairly galled this week when the King went out yachting, meaning to be back for the theatre; and the time passed, and it got dark, and the play couldn't begin, and eight or nine o'clock came, and never a sign of him. I don't know when 'a did land; but 'twas said by all that it was a foolhardy pleasure to take.

## FOURTH SPECTATOR

He's a very obstinate and comical old gentleman; and by all account 'a wouldn't make port when asked to.

## SECOND SPECTATOR

Lard, Lard, if 'a were nabbed, it wouldn't make a deal of difference! We should have nobody to zing to, and play single-stick to, and grin at through horse-collars, that's true. And nobody to sign our few documents. But we should rub along some way, goodnow.

## FIRST SPECTATOR

Step up on this barrow; you can see better. The troopers now passing are the York Hussars — foreigners to a man, except the officers — the same regiment the two young Germans belonged to who were shot here four years ago. Now come the Light Dragoons; what a time they take to get all past! See, the King turns to speak to one of his notables. Well, well! this day will be recorded in history.

## SECOND SPECTATOR

Or another soon to follow it! (He gazes over the Channel.) There's not a speck of



an enemy upon that shiny water yet; but the Brest fleet is said to have put to sea, to act in concert with the army crossing from Boulogne; and if so the French will soon be here; when God save us all! I've took to drinking neat, for, says I, one may as well have his innerds burnt out as shot out, and 'tis a good deal pleasanter for the man that owns 'em. They say that a cannon-ball knocked poor Jim Popple's maw right up into the futtock-shrouds at the Nile, where 'a hung like a nightcap out to dry. Much good to him his obeying his old mother's wish and refusing his allowance o' rum!

The bands play and the Review continues till past eleven o'clock. Then follows a sham fight. At noon precisely the royal carriages draw off the ground into the highway that leads down to the town and Gloucester Lodge, followed by other equipages in such numbers that the road is blocked. A multitude comes after on foot. Presently the vehicles manage to proceed to the watering-place, and the troops march away to the various camps as a sea-mist cloaks the perspective.

## SCENE V

THE SAME. RAINBARROWS' BEACON,  
EGDON HEATH

Night in mid-August. A lofty ridge of heathland reveals itself dimly, terminating in an abrupt slope, at the summit of which are three tumuli. On the sheltered

side of the most prominent of these stands a hut of turves with a brick chimney. In front are two ricks of fuel, one of heather and furze for quick ignition, the other of wood, for slow burning. Something in the feel of the darkness and in the personality of the spot imparts a sense of uninterrupted space around, the view by day extending from the cliffs of the Isle of Wight eastward to Blackdon Hill by Deadman's Bay westward, and south across the Valley of the From to the ridge that screens the Channel.

Two old men with pikes loom up, on duty as beacon-keepers beside the ricks.

#### FIRST OLD MAN

Now, Jems Purchess, once more mark my words. Black'on is the point we've to watch, and not Kingsbere; and I'll explain for why. If he do land anywhere hereabout 'twill be inside Deadman's Bay, and the signal will straightway come from Black'on. But there thou'st stand, glowing and staring with all thy eyes at Kingsbere! I tell 'ee what 'tis, Jem Purchess, your brain is softening; and you be getting too old for business of state like ours!

#### SECOND OLD MAN

You've let your tongue wrack your few rames of good breeding, John.

## FIRST OLD MAN

The words of my Lord Lieutenant was, whenever you see Kingsbere-Hill Beacon fired to the eastward, or Black'on to the westward, light up; and keep your second fire burning for two hours. Was that our documents or was it not?

## SECOND OLD MAN

I don't gainsay it. And so I keep my eye on Kingsbere, because that's most likely o' the two, says I.

## FIRST OLD MAN

That shows the curious depths of your ignorance. However, I'll have patience, and say on. Didst ever larn geography?

## SECOND OLD MAN

No. Nor no other corrupt practices.

## FIRST OLD MAN

Tcht-tcht! — Well, I'll have patience, and put it to him in another form. Dost know the world is round — eh? I warrant dostn't!

## SECOND OLD MAN

I warrant I do!

## FIRST OLD MAN

How d'ye make that out, when th'st never been to school?

## SECOND OLD MAN

I larned it at church, thank God.

## FIRST OLD MAN

Church? What have God A'mighty got to do with profane knowledge? Beware what you be saying, Jems Purchess!

## SECOND OLD MAN

I say I did, whether or no. 'Twas the zingers up in gallery that I had it from. They busted out that strong with "the round world and they that dwell therein," that we common fokes down under could do no less than believe 'em.

## FIRST OLD MAN

Canst be sharp enough in the wrong place as usual—I warrant canst! However, I'll have patience with 'en, and say on!—Suppose, now, my hat is the world; and there, as might be, stands the Camp of Belong, where Boney is. The world goes round, so, and Belong goes

round too. Twelve hours pass ; round goes the world still — so. Where's Belong now ?

A pause. Two other figures, a man's and a woman's, rise against the sky out of the gloom.

FIRST OLD MAN (shouldering his pike)

Who goes there? Friend or foe, in the King's name!

WOMAN

Piece o' trumpery! "Who goes" yourself! What d'ye talk o', John Whiting! Can't your eyes earn their living any longer, then, that you don't know your own neighbours? 'Tis Private Cattle of the Locals and his wife Keziar, down at Bloom's-End — who else should it be!

FIRST OLD MAN (lowering his pike)

A form o' words, Mis'ess Cattle, no more ; ordained by his Majesty's Gover'ment to be spoke by all we on sworn duty for the defence o' the country. Strict watch and ward is our only horn of salvation in these times. — But, my dear woman, why ever have ye come lumbering up to Rainbarrows at this time o' night?

WOMAN

We've been troubled wi' bad dreams, owing to the firing out at sea yesterday ; and

at last I could sleep no more, feeling sure that sommat boded of His coming. And I said to Cantle, I'll ray myself, and go up to Beacon, and ask if anything have been heard or seen to-night. And here we be.

#### FIRST OLD MAN

Not a sign or sound — all's as still as a churchyard. And how is your good man?

#### PRIVATE

Clk! I be all right! I was in the ranks, helping to keep the ground at the review by the King this week. We was a wonderful sight — wonderful! The King said so again and again. — Yes, there was he, and there was I, though naturally not daring to move a' eyebrow in the presence of Majesty. I have come home on a night's leave — off there again to-morrow. Boney's expected every day, thank God! Yes, our hopes are to be fulfilled soon, as we say in the army.

#### FIRST OLD MAN

There, there, Cantle; don't ye speak quite so large, and stand so over-upright. Your back is as holler as a fire-dog's. Do ye suppose that we on active service here don't know war news? Mind you don't go taking

to your heels when the next alarm comes, as you did at last year's.

## PRIVATE

That had nothing to do with fighting, for I'm as bold as a lion when I'm up, and "Shoulder Fawlocks!" sounds as common as my own name to me. 'Twas —— (Lowering his voice.) Have ye heard?

## FIRST OLD MAN

To be sure we have.

## PRIVATE

Ghastly, isn't it!

## FIRST OLD MAN

Ghastly! Frightful!

## SECOND OLD MAN (to Private)

He don't know what it is! That's his pride and puffery. What is it that's so ghastly — hey?

## PRIVATE

Well, there, I can't tell it. 'Twas that that made the whole eighty of our company run away — though we be the bravest of the brave in natural jeopardies, or the little boys

wouldn't run after us and call us the "Bang-up-Locals."

WOMAN (in undertones)

I can tell you a word or two on't. It is about His victuals. They say that He lives upon human flesh, and has rashers o' baby every morning for breakfast—for all the world like the Cernel Giant in old ancient times!

SECOND OLD MAN

Ye can't believe all ye hear.

PRIVATE

I only believe half. And I only own—such in my challengeful character—that perhaps He do eat pagan infants when He's in the desert. But not Christian ones at home. Oh no—'tis too much!

WOMAN

Whether or no, I sometimes—God forgie me!—laugh wi' horror at the queerness o't, till I am that weak I can hardly go round house. He should have the washing of 'em a few times; I warrant 'a wouldn't want to eat babies any more!

A silence, during which they gaze around at the dark dome of starless sky.



## SECOND OLD MAN

There'll be a change in the weather soon, by the look o't. I can hear the cows moo in Froom Valley as if I were close to 'em, and the lantern at Max Turnpike is shining quite plain.

## FIRST OLD MAN

Well, come in and taste a drop o' sommat we've got here, that will warm the cockles of your heart as ye wamble homealong. We housed eighty tubs here last night for them that shan't be named — landed at Lullwind Cove the night afore, though they had a narrow shave with the riding-officers this run.

They make towards the hut, when a light on the west horizon becomes visible, and quickly enlarges.

## SECOND OLD MAN

He's come!

## FIRST OLD MAN

Come he is, though you do say it! This, then, is the beginning of what England's waited for!

## SECOND OLD MAN

Just what you was thanking God for by-now, Private Cattle.

## PRIVATE

My meaning was ——

## WOMAN (simplering)

Oh that I hadn't married a fiery sojer, to make me bring fatherless children into the world, all through his dreadful calling! Why didn't a man of no sprawl content me! I feel as if I were smote hip and thigh in Jezreel!

## FIRST OLD MAN (shouldering his pike)

We can't heed your innocent pratings any longer, good neighbours, being in the King's service, and a hot invasion on. Fall in, fall in, mate. Straight to the tinder-box. Quick march!

The old men hasten to the hut, and are heard striking a flint and steel. Returning with a lit lantern they ignite a wisp of furze, and with this set the first stack of fuel in a blaze. The private of the Locals and his wife hastily retreat by the light of the flaming beacon, under which the purple rotundities of the heath show like bronze, and the pits like the eye-sockets of a skull.

## SPIRIT SINISTER

*This is good, and spells blood. (To the Chorus of the Years) I assume that It means to let us carry out this invasion with pleasing slaughter, so as not to disappoint my hope?*

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*We carry out? Nay, but should we  
Ordain what bloodshed is to be!*

SEMICHORUS II

*The Immanent, that urgeth all,  
Rules what may or may not befall!*

SEMICHORUS I

*Ere systemed suns were globed and lit  
The slaughters of the race were writ,*

SEMICHORUS II

*And wasting wars, by land and sea,  
Fixed, like all else, immutably!*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*Well; be it so. My argument is that War  
makes rattling good history; but Peace is poor  
reading. So I back Bonaparte for the reason  
that he will give pleasure to posterity.*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Gross hypocrite!*

CHORUS OF THE YEARS

*We comprehend him not.*

The day breaks over the heathery upland, on which the beacon is still burning. The morning reveals the white surface of a highway which, coming from the Royal watering-place beyond the hills, stretches towards the outskirts of the heath and passes away eastward.

### DUMB SHOW

Moving figures and vehicles dot the surface of the road, all progressing in one direction, away from the coast. In the foreground the shapes appear as those of civilians, mostly on foot, but many in gigs and tradesmen's carts and on horseback. When they reach an intermediate hill some pause and look back; others enter on the next decline landwards without turning their heads.

From the opposite horizon numerous companies of volunteers, in the local uniform of red with green facings,<sup>1</sup> are moving coastwards in companies; as are also irregular bodies of pikemen without uniform; while on the upper slopes of the downs towards the shore regiments of the line are visible, with cavalry and artillery; all passing over to the coast.

At a signal from the Chief Intelligences two Phantoms of Rumour enter on the highway in the garb of country-men.

### FIRST PHANTOM (to Pedestrians)

*Whither so fast, good neighbours, and before breakfast, too? Empty bellies be bad to vamp on.*

---

<sup>1</sup> These historic facings, which I believe won for the local (Old 39th) regiment the nickname of "Green Linnets," have been changed for no apparent reason.

FIRST PEDESTRIAN (laden with a pack, and speaking breathlessly)

He's landed west'ard, out by Abbot's Beach. And if you have property you'll save it and yourselves, as we are doing!

SECOND PEDESTRIAN

All yesterday the firing at Boulogne  
Was like the seven thunders heard in Heaven  
When the fierce angel spoke. So did he  
draw  
Men's eyes that way, the while his thousand  
boats  
Full-manned, flat-bottomed for the shallowest  
shore,  
Dropped down to west, and crossed our  
frontage here.  
Seen from above they specked the water-  
shine  
As will a flight of swallows towards dim eve,  
Descending on a smooth and loitering stream  
To seek some eyot's sedge.

SECOND PHANTOM

*We are sent to enlighten you and ease your  
souls.  
Even now a courier canters to the port  
To check the baseless scare.*

FIRST PEDESTRIAN (to second Pedestrian)

These be inland men who, I warrant 'ee, don't know a lerret from a lighter! Let's take no heed of such, comrade; and hurry on!

FIRST PHANTOM

*Will you not hear  
That what was seen behind the midnight mist,  
Their oar-blades tossing twinkles to the moon,  
Was but a fleet of fishing-craft belated  
By reason of the vastness of their haul?*

FIRST PEDESTRIAN

Hey? And d'ye know it? — Now I look back to the top o' Rudgeway the folk do seem as come to a pause there. — Be this true, never again do I stir my stumps for any alarm short of the Day of Judgment! Nine times has my rheumatical rest been broke in these last three years by hues and cries of Boney upon us. 'Od rot the feller; now he's made a fool of me once more, till my inside is like a wash-tub, what wi' being so gallied, and running so leery! — But how if you be one of the enemy, sent to sow these tares, so to speak it, these false tidings, and coax us into a fancied safety? Hey, neighbours? I don't, after all, care for this story!

## SECOND PEDESTRIAN

Onwards again !  
If Boney's come, 'tis best to be away ;  
And if he's not, why, we've a holiday !

[Exeunt Pedestrians.

The Spirits of Rumour vanish, while the scene seems to become involved in the smoke from the beacon, and slowly disappears.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The remains of the lonely hut occupied by the beacon-keepers, consisting of some half-buried brickbats, and a little mound of peat overgrown with moss, are still visible on the elevated spot referred to.

## ACT THIRD

### SCENE I

BOULOGNE. THE CHÂTEAU AT  
PONT-DE-BRIQUES

A room in the Château, which is used as the Imperial quarters. The EMPEROR NAPOLÉON and M. GASPARD MONGE, the mathematician and philosopher, seated at breakfast.

Enter the officer in attendance.

OFFICER

Monsieur the Admiral Decrès awaits  
A moment's audience with your Majesty,  
Or now, or later.

NAPOLÉON

Bid him come in at once —  
At last Villeneuve has raised the Brest blockade!

Enter DECRÈS.

What of the squadrons' movements, good  
Decrès?  
Brest opened, and all sailing Channelwards,  
Like swans into a creek at feeding-time?



## DECRÈS

Such news was what I'd hoped, your Majesty,  
To send across this daybreak. But events  
Have proved intractable, it seems, of late;  
And hence I haste in person to report  
The featless facts that just have dashed  
my ——

NAPOLÉON (darkening)

Well?

## DECRÈS

Sire, at the very juncture when the fleets  
Sailed out from Ferrol, fever raged aboard  
“L'Achille” and “l'Algeciras”: later on,  
Mischief assailed our Spanish comrades' ships;  
Several ran foul of neighbours; whose new  
hurts,  
Being added to their innate clumsiness,  
Gave hap the upper hand; and in quick  
course  
Demoralized the whole; until Villeneuve,  
Judging that Calder now with Nelson rode,  
And prescient of unparalleled disaster  
If he pushed on in so disjoint a trim,  
Bowed to the inevitable; and thus, perforce,  
Leaving to other opportunity  
Brest and the Channel scheme, with vast regret  
Steered southward into Cadiz.

NAPOLÉON (having risen from the table)

What! — Is, then,  
My scheme of years to be disdained and  
dashed.

By this man's like, a wretched moral coward,  
Whom you must needs foist on me as one fit  
For full command in pregnant enterprise!

MONGE (aside)

I'm one too many here! Let me step out  
Till this black squall blows over. Poor  
Decrès.

Would that this precious project, disinterred  
From naval archives of King Louis' reign,  
Had ever lingered fusting where 'twas found!<sup>1</sup>

[Exit MONGE.]

NAPOLÉON

To help a friend you foul a country's  
fame! —

Decrès, not only chose you this Villeneuve,  
But you have nourished secret sour opinions  
Akin to his, and thereby helped to scathe

---

<sup>1</sup> “Le projet existe encore aux archives de la marine que Napoléon consultait incessamment: il sentait que cette marine depuis Louis XIV. avait fait de grandes choses: le plan de l'Expédition d'Egypte et de la descente en Angleterre se trouvaient au ministère de la marine.” — CAPEFIGUE: *L'Europe pendant le Consulat et l'Empire*.

As stably based a project as this age  
Has sunned to ripeness. Ever the French  
marine

Have you decried, ever contrived to bring  
Despair into the fleet! Why, this Villeneuve,  
Your man, this rank incompetent, this  
traitor —

Of whom I asked no more than fight and lose,  
Provided he detained the enemy —

A frigate is too great for his command!  
What shall be said of one who, at a breath,  
When a few casual sailors find them sick,  
When falls a broken boom or slitten sail,  
When rumour hints that Calder's tubs and  
Nelson's

May join, and bob about in company,  
Is straightway paralyzed, and doubles back  
On all his ripened plans! —  
Bring him, ay, bodily; hale him out from Cadiz,  
Compel him up the Channel by main force,  
And, having doffed him his supreme command,  
Give the united squadrons to Ganteaume!

#### DECRÈS

Your Majesty, while umbraged, righteously,  
By an event my tongue dragged dry to tell,  
Makes my hard situation over-hard  
By your ascription to the actors in't  
Of motives such and such. 'Tis not for me  
To answer these reproaches, Sire, and ask

Why years-long mindfulness of France's fame  
In things marine should win no confidence.  
I speak; but am unable to convince!

True is it that this man has been my friend  
Since boyhood made us schoolmates; and I  
say

That he would yield the heel-drops of his  
heart

With joyful readiness this day, this hour,  
To do his country service. Yet no less  
Is it his drawback that he sees too far.

And there are times, Sire, when a shorter  
sight

Charms Fortune more. A certain sort of  
bravery

Some people have — to wit, this same Lord  
Nelson —

Which is but fatuous faith in one's own star  
Swoln to the very verge of childishness,  
(Smugly disguised as putting trust in God,  
A habit with these English folk); whereby  
A headstrong blindness to contingencies  
Carries the actor on, and serves him well  
In some nice issues clearer sight would mar.  
Such eyeless bravery Villeneuve has not;  
But, Sire, he is no coward.

#### NAPOLÉON

Well, have it so! — What are we going to do?  
My brain has only one wish — to succeed!

## DECRÈS

My voice wanes weaker with you, Sire ; is  
nought !

Yet these few words, as Minister of Marine,  
I'll venture now. — My process would be  
thus : —

Our projects for a junction of the fleets  
Being well-discerned and read by every eye  
Through long postponement, England is  
prepared.

I would recast them. Later in the year  
Form sundry squadrons of this massive one,  
Harass the English till the winter time,  
Then rendezvous at Cadiz ; where leave half  
To catch the enemy's eye and call their  
cruizers,

While, rounding Scotland with the other half,  
You make the Channel by the eastern strait,  
Cover the passage of our army-boats,  
And plant the blow.

## NAPOLÉON

And what if they perceive  
Our Scottish route, and meet us eastwardly ?

## DECRÈS

I have thought of it, and planned a counter-  
move ;

I'll write the scheme more clearly and at  
length,  
And send it hither to your Majesty.

## NAPOLÉON

Do so forthwith ; and send me in Daru.

Exit DECRÈS. Re-enter MONGE.

Our breakfast, Monge, to-day has been cut  
short,  
And those discussions on the ancient tongues  
Wherein you shine, must yield to modern  
moils.

Nay, hasten not away ; though feeble wills,  
Incompetence, ay, imbecility,  
In some who feign to serve the cause of  
France,  
Do make me other than myself just now ! —  
Ah — here's Daru.

DARU enters. MONGE takes his leave.

Daru, sit down and write. Yes, here, at  
once,  
This room will serve me now. What think  
you, eh ?  
Villeneuve has just turned tail and run to  
Cadiz,  
So quite postponed — perhaps even over-  
thrown —  
My long-conned project against yonder shore

As 'twere a juvenile's snow-built device  
 But made for melting! Think of it, Daru, —  
 My God, my God, how can I talk thereon!  
 A plan well judged, well charted, well up-  
     reared,  
 To end in nothing! . . . Sit you down and  
 write.

NAPOLÉON walks up and down, and resumes after a  
 silence :

Write this. — A volte-face 'tis indeed! —  
 Write, write!

DARU (holding pen to paper)

I wait, your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON

First Bernadotte —

Yes; " Bernadotte moves out from Hanover  
 Through Hesse upon Würzburg and the  
 Danube. —

Marmont from Holland bears along the  
 Rhine,

And joins at Mainz and Würzburg Berna-  
 dotte. . . .

While these prepare their routes the army  
 here

Will turn its back on Britain's tedious shore,  
 And, closing up with Augereau at Brest,  
 Set out full force due eastward. . . .

By the Black Forest feign a straight attack,  
 The while our purpose is to skirt its left,  
 Meet in Franconia Bernadotte and Marmont;  
 Traverse the Danube somewhat down from  
 Ulm;

Entrap the Austrian columns by their rear;  
 Surround them, take them; march upon  
 Vienna,

Where, Austria settled, I engage the Tsar,  
 While Masséna detains in Italy  
 The Archduke Charles.

Foreseeing such might shape,  
 Each high- and by-way to the Danube hence  
 I have of late had measured, mapped, and  
 judged;

Such spots as suit for depôts chosen and  
 marked;

Each regiment's daily pace and bivouac  
 Writ tablewise for ready reference;  
 All which itineraries are sent herewith."

So shall I crush the two gigantic sets  
 Upon the Empire, now grown imminent.

— Let me reflect. — First Bernadotte —

But nay,  
 The courier to Marmont must go first.  
 Well, well. — The order of our march from  
 hence

I will advise. . . . My knock at George's door  
 With bland inquiries why his royal hand  
 Withheld due answer to my friendly lines,  
 And tossed the irksome business to his clerks,



Is thus perforce delayed. But not for long.  
 Instead of crossing, thitherward I go  
 By roundabout contrivance not less sure!

DARU

I'll bring the writing to your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON and DARU go out severally.

CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Recording Angel, trace*

*This bold campaign his thought has spun apace—*

*One that bids fair for immortality*

*Among the earthlings—if immortal deeds*

*May be ascribed to so extemporary*

*And transient a race!*

*It will be called, in rhetoric and rhyme,*

*As son to sire succeeds,*

*A model for the tactics of all time;*

*“The Great Campaign of Eighteen-hundred-  
 five,”*

*By millions of mankind not yet alive.*

## SCENE II

THE FRONTIERS OF UPPER AUSTRIA AND  
 BAVARIA

A view of the country from mid-air, at a point south of the River Inn, which is seen as a silver thread, winding northward between its junction with the Salza and the

Danube, and forming the boundaries of the two countries. The Danube shows itself as a crinkled satin riband, stretching from left to right in the far background of the picture, the Inn discharging its waters into the larger river.

### DUMB SHOW

A vast Austrian army creeps dully along the mid-distance, in the form of detached masses and columns of a whitish cast. The columns insensibly draw nearer to each other, and are seen to be converging from the east upon the banks of the Inn aforesaid.

#### A RECORDING ANGEL (in recitative)

*This movement as of molluscs on a leaf,  
Which from our vantage here we scan afar,  
Is one conducted by the famous Mack  
To countercheck Napoléon, still believed  
To be intent on England from Boulogne,  
And heedless of such rallies in his rear.  
Mack's enterprise is now to cross Bavaria—  
Beneath us stretched in ripening summer peace  
As field unwonted for these ugly jars—  
And seize on Ulm, past Swabia leftward there.*

*Outraged Bavaria, simmering in disquiet  
At Munich down behind us, Isar-fringed,  
And torn between his fair wife's hate of  
France*

*And his own itch to gird at Austrian bluff  
For riding roughshod through his territory,  
Wavers from this to that. The while Time  
hastes*

*The eastward streaming of Napoléon's host,  
As soon we see.*

The silent insect-creep of the Austrian columns towards the banks of the Inn continues to be seen till the view fades to nebulousness and dissolves.

### SCENE III

#### BOULOGNE. THE ST. OMER ROAD

It is a morning at the end of August, and the road stretches out of the town eastward.

The divisions of the "Army-for-England" are making preparations to march. Some portions are in marching order. Bands strike up, and the regiments start on their journey towards the Rhine and Danube. Bonaparte and his officers watch the movements from an eminence. The soldiers, as they pace along under their eagles with beaming eyes, sing "Le Chant du Départ," and other martial songs, shout "Vive l'Empereur!" and babble of repeating the days of Italy, Egypt, Marengo, and Hohenlinden.

#### NAPOLÉON

To England afterwards!

#### CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES (aerial music)

*As it may be!*

The scene as it lingers exhibits the gradual diminishing of the troops along the roads through the undulating August landscape, and the disappearance of each marching mass over the eastern horizon.

# ACT FOURTH

## SCENE I

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH  
WESSEX

A sunny day in autumn. A room in the red-brick royal residence known as Gloucester Lodge.<sup>1</sup>

At a front triple-lighted window stands a telescope on a tripod. Through the open middle sash is visible the crescent-curved expanse of the Bay as a sheet of brilliant translucent green, on which ride vessels of war at anchor. On the left hand white cliffs stretch away till they terminate in St. Aldhelm's Head, and form a background to the level water-line on that side. In the centre are the open sea and blue sky. A near headland rises on the right, surmounted by a battery, over which appears the remoter bald grey brow of the Isle of Slingers.

In the foreground yellow sands spread smoothly, whereon there are sundry temporary erections for athletic sports ; and closelier runs an esplanade on which a fashionable crowd is promenading. Immediately outside the Lodge are companies of soldiers, groups of officers, and sentries.

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<sup>1</sup> This weather-beaten old building, though now an hotel, is but little altered.

Within the room the KING and PITT are discovered. The KING's eyes show traces of recent inflammation, and the Minister has a wasted look.

## KING

Yes, yes ; I grasp your reasons, Mr. Pitt,  
And grant you audience gladly. More than  
that,

Your visit to this shore is apt and timely,  
And if it do but yield you needful rest  
From fierce debates, and other strains of office  
Which you and I in common have to bear,  
'Twill be well earned. The bathing is un-  
matched

Elsewhere in Europe,—see its mark on me! —  
The air like liquid life. — But of this matter :  
What argue these late movements seen  
abroad ?

What of the country now the session's past ;  
What of the country, eh ? and of the war ?

## PITT

The thoughts I have laid before your Majesty  
Would make for this, in sum : —

That Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, and their  
friends,

Be straightway asked to join. With Melville  
gone,

With Sidmouth, and with Buckinghamshire  
too,

The steerage of affairs has been of late  
Somewhat provisional, as you, sir, know,  
With stop-gap functions thrust on offices  
Which can be tolerated but a while.  
So, for the weighty reasons I have urged,  
I do repeat my most respectful hope  
To win your Majesty's ungrudged assent  
To what I have proposed.

KING

But nothing, sure,  
Has been more plain to all, dear Mr. Pitt,  
Than that your own proved energy and scope  
Is ample, without aid, to carry on  
Our just crusade against this Corsican?  
These helps we need not. Pray you think  
upon't,  
And speak to me again. — We've had alarms  
Within these few weeks past, as you may  
know,  
That Bonaparte had landed close hereby.

PITT

Such rumours come as regularly as harvest.

KING

And now he has left Boulogne with all his  
host?  
Was it his object to invade at all,  
Or was his vast assemblage here a blind?

PITT

Undoubtedly he meant invasion, sir,  
Had fortune favoured. He may try it yet.  
And, as I said, could we but close with Fox——

KING

But, but ; — I ask, what is his object now ?  
Lord Nelson's Captain — Hardy — whose old  
home

Stands in a peaceful vale hard by us here —  
Who came two weeks ago to see his friends,  
I talked to in this room a lengthy while.

He says our navy still is in the dark

As to the aims by sea of Bonaparte

Now the Boulogne attempt has fizzled out,  
And what he schemes afloat with Spain  
combined.

The " Victory " lay that fortnight at  
Spithead,

And Nelson since has gone aboard and sailed ;  
Yes, sailed again. The " Royal Sovereign "   
follows,

And others her. Nelson was hailed and  
cheered

To huskiness while leaving Southsea shore,  
Gentle and simple wildly thronging round.

PITT

Ay sir. Young women hung upon his arm,  
And old ones blessed, and stroked him with  
their hands.

KING

Ah — you have heard, of course. God speed  
him, Pitt.

PITT

Amen, amen !

KING

I read it as a thing  
Of signal augury, and one which bodes  
Heaven's confidence in me and in my line,  
That I should rule as King in such an age. . . .  
Well, well. — So this new march of Bonaparte's  
Was unexpected, forced perchance on him?

PITT

It may be so, your Majesty ; it may.  
Last noon the Austrian ambassador,  
Whom I consulted ere I posted down,  
Assured me that his latest papers state  
That General Mack and eighty thousand men  
Have made good speed across Bavaria  
To wait the French and give them check at  
Ulm,  
That fortress-frontier-town, entrenched and  
walled,  
A place long chosen as a vantage-point  
Whereon to encounter them as they outwind  
From the blind shades and baffling green defiles  
Of the Black Forest, worn with wayfaring.



Here Mack will intercept his agile foe  
Hasting to meet the Russians in Bohemia,  
And cripple him, if not annihilate.

Thus now, sir, opens out this Great  
Alliance  
Of Russia, Austria, England, whereto I  
Have lent my earnest efforts through long  
months,  
And the realm gives her money, ships, and  
men. —

It claps a muffler round this Cock's steel spurs,  
And leaves me sanguine on his overthrow.  
But then, — this coalition of resources  
Demands a strong and active Cabinet  
To aid your Majesty's directive hand ;  
And thus I urge again the said additions. —  
These brilliant intellects of the other side  
Who stand by Fox. With us conjoined,  
they ——

KING

What, what, again — in face of my sound  
reasons !

Believe me, Pitt, you underrate yourself ;  
You do not need such aid. The splendid feat  
Of banding Europe in a righteous cause  
That you have achieved, so soon to put to  
shame

This wicked bombardier of dynasties  
That rule by right Divine, goes straight to  
prove

We had best continue as we have begun,  
And call no partners to our management.  
To fear dilemmas horning up ahead  
Is not your wont. Nay, nay, now, Mr. Pitt,  
I must be firm. And if you love your King  
You'll goad him not so rashly to embrace  
This Fox-and-Grenville faction and its friends.  
Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war!  
Hey, what? But what besides?

PITT

I say besides, sir, . . . nothing!

A silence.

KING

The Chancellor's here, and many friends  
of mine: Lady Winchelsea, Lord and Lady  
Chesterfield, Lady Bulkeley, General Garth,  
and Mr. Phipps the oculist — not the least  
important to me. He is a worthy and a skilful  
man. My eyes, he says, are as marvellously  
improved in durability as I know them to be  
in power. I have arranged to go to-morrow  
with the Princesses, and the Dukes of Cumber-  
land, Sussex, and Cambridge (who are also  
here) for a ride on the Ridgeway, and through  
the Camp on the downs. You'll accompany  
us there?

PITT

I am honoured by your Majesty's commands.

PITT looks resignedly out of the window.

What curious structure do I see outside, sir?

KING

It's but a stage, a type of all the world. The burgesses have arranged it in my honour. At six o'clock this evening there are to be combats at single-stick to amuse the folk; four guineas the prize for the man who breaks most heads. Afterwards there is to be a grinning match through horse-collars—a very humorous sport which I must stay here and witness; for I am interested in whatever entertains my subjects.

PITT

Not one in all the land but knows it, sir.

KING

Now, Mr. Pitt, you must require repose; Consult your own convenience then, I beg, On when you leave.

PITT

I thank your Majesty.

He departs as one whose purpose has failed, and the scene shuts.

## SCENE II

## BEFORE THE CITY OF ULM

A prospect of the city from the east, showing in the foreground a low-lying marshy country bounded in mid-distance by the banks of the Danube, which, bordered by poplars and willows, flows across the picture from the left to the Elchingen Bridge near the right of the scene, and is backed by irregular heights and terraces of espaliered vines. Between these and the river stands the city, crowded with old gabled houses and surrounded by walls, bastions, and a ditch, all the edifices being dominated by the nave and tower of the huge Gothic Münster.

On the most prominent of the heights at the back — the Michaelsberg — to the upper-right of the view, is encamped the mass of the Austrian army, amid half-finished entrenchments. Advanced posts of the same are seen south-east of the city, not far from the advanced corps of the French Grand-Army under SOULT, MARMONT, MURAT, LANNES, NEY, and DUPONT, which occupy in a semicircle the whole breadth of the flat landscape in front, and extend across the river to higher ground on the right hand of the panorama.

Heavy mixed drifts of rain and snow are descending impartially on the French and on the Austrians, the downfall nearly blotting out the latter on the hills. A chill October wind wails across the country, and the poplars yield slantingly to the gusts.

## DUMB SHOW

Drenched peasants are busily at work, fortifying the heights of the Austrian position in the face of the

enemy. Vague companies of Austrians above, and of the French below, hazy and indistinct in the thick atmosphere, come and go without apparent purpose near their respective lines.

Closer at hand NAPOLÉON, in his familiar blue-grey overcoat, rides hither and thither with his marshals, haranguing familiarly the bodies of soldiery as he passes them, and observing and pointing out the disposition of the Austrians to his companions.

Thicker sheets of rain fly across as the murk of evening increases, which at length entirely obscures the prospect, and cloaks its bleared lights and fires.

### SCENE III

#### ULM. WITHIN THE CITY

The interior of the Austrian headquarters on the following morning. A tempest raging without.

GENERAL MACK, haggard and anxious, the ARCHDUKE FERDINAND, PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG, GENERAL JELLACHICH, GENERALS RIESCH, BIBERACH, and other field officers discovered, seated at a table with a map spread out before them. A wood fire blazes between tall andirons in a yawning fireplace. At every more than usually boisterous gust of wind the smoke flaps into the room.

#### MACK

The accursèd cunning of our adversary  
 Confounds all codes of honourable war,  
 Which ever have held as granted that the  
 track  
 Of armies bearing hither from the Rhine —

Whether in peace or strenuous invasion —  
Should pierce the Schwarzwald, and through  
    Memmingen,  
And meet us in our front. But he must  
    wind  
And corkscrew meanly round, where foot  
    of man  
Can scarce find pathway, stealing up to us  
Thiefwise, by our back door! Nevertheless,  
If English war-fleets be abreast Boulogne,  
As these deserters tell, and ripe to land there,  
It destines Bonaparte to pack him back  
Across the Rhine again. We've but to wait,  
And see him go.

## ARCHDUKE

But who shall say if these bright tales be  
    true?

## MACK

Even then, small matter, your Imperial  
    Highness,  
The Russians near us daily, and must soon —  
Ay, far within the eight days I have named —  
Be operating to untie this knot,  
If we hold on.

## ARCHDUKE

Conjectures these — no more!  
I stomach not such waiting. Neither hope

Has kernel in it. I and my cavalry  
With caution, when the shadows fall to-night,  
Can bore some hole in this engirdlement;  
Outpass the gate north-east; join General  
    Werneck,  
And somehow cut our way Bohemia-wards:  
'Tis worth the hazard, in our straitened case.

MACK (firmly)

The body of our force stays here with me.  
And I am much surprised, your Highness,  
    much,  
You mark not how destructive 'tis to part!  
If we wait on, for certain we should wait  
In our full strength, compacted, undispersed  
By such partition as your Highness plans.

SCHWARZENBERG

There's truth in urging we should not divide,  
But weld more closely. — Yet why stay at all?  
Methinks there's but one sure salvation left,  
To wit, that herefrom we conjunctly march,  
And with much circumspection, towards the  
    Tyrol.

The subtle often rack their wits in vain —  
Assay whole magazines of strategy,  
To shun ill loomings deemed insuperable,  
When simple souls by stumbling up thereto  
Find the grim shapes but air. But let us  
    grant

That the investing French so ring us in  
 As to leave not a span for such exploit;  
 Then go we — throw ourselves upon their  
     steel,  
 And batter through, or die! —  
 What say you, Generals? Speak your minds,  
     I pray.

JELLACHICH

I favour marching out — the Tyrol way.

RIESCH

Bohemia best! The route thereto is open.

ARCHDUKE

My course is chosen. 'Tis a black campaign,  
 Which Pitt's alarmed dispatches pricked us to,  
 All unforeseeing! Any risk for me  
 Rather than court humiliation here!

MACK has risen during the latter remarks, walked to the window, and looked out at the rain. He returns with an air of embarrassment.

MACK (to Archduke)

It is my privilege firmly to submit  
 That your Imperial Highness undertake  
 No venturous vaulting into risks unknown. —



Assume that you, Sire, as you have proposed,  
With your light regiments and the cavalry,  
Detach yourself from us, to scoop a way  
By circuits northwards through the Rauhe  
Alps

And Herdenheim, into Bohemia :  
Reports all point that you will be attacked,  
Enveloped, borne on to capitulate.  
What worse can happen here? —  
Remember, Sire, the Emperor deposes me,  
Should such a clash arise as has arisen,  
To exercise supreme authority.  
The honour of our arms, our race, demands  
That none of your Imperial Highness' line  
Be pounded prisoner by this vulgar foe,  
Who is not France, but an adventurer  
Imposing on that country for his gain.

#### ARCHDUKE

I amply recognize the drear disgrace  
Involving Austria if this upstart chief  
Should of his cunning seize and hold in pawn  
A royal-lineaged son, whose ancestors  
Root on the primal rocks of history.

#### SPIRIT IRONIC

*Note that. Five years, and legal brethren  
they —  
This feudal treasure and the upstart man !*

## ARCHDUKE

But it seems clear to me that loitering here  
Is full as like to compass our surrender  
As moving hence. And ill it therefore suits  
The mood of one of my high temperature  
To pause inactive while await me means  
Of desperate cure for these so desperate ills!

[The ARCHDUKE FERDINAND goes out.]

A troubled silence follows, during which the gusts call into the chimney, and raindrops spit on the fire.

## SCHWARZENBERG

The Archduke bears him shrewdly in this  
course.

We may as well look matters in the face,  
And that we are cooped and cornered is most  
clear;

Clear is it, too, that but a miracle  
Can work to loose us! I have stoutly held  
That this man's three years' ostentatious  
scheme

To fling his army on the tempting shores  
Of our allies the English was a — well —  
Scarce other than a trick of thimble-rig  
To still us into false security.

## JELLACHICH

Well, I know nothing. None needs list to  
me.

But, on the whole, to southward seems the  
course

For plunging, all in force, immediately.

Another pause.

SPIRIT SINISTER

*The Will throws Mack again in agitation :  
'Tis good what he'll say now !*

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*Nay, hard one, nay ;  
The clouds weep for him !*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*If he must he must ;  
And 'tis good antic at a vacant time.*

MACK goes restlessly to the door, and is heard pacing about the vestibule, and questioning the aides and other officers gathered there.

A GENERAL

He wavers like this smoke-wreath that  
inclines

Now north, now south, as the storm-currents  
rule !

MACK (returning)

Bring that deserter hither once again.

A French soldier is brought in, blindfolded and guarded. The bandage is removed.

Well, tell us what he says.

AN OFFICER (after speaking to the prisoner  
in French)

He still repeats  
That the whole body of the British strength  
Is even now descending on Boulogne,  
And that self-preservation must, of need,  
Clear us from Bonaparte ere many days,  
Who even now is moving.

MACK

Still retain him.

He walks to the fire. The soldier is taken out.

JELLACHICH (bending over the map in  
argument with RIESC)

I much prefer our self-won information ;  
And if we have Marshal Soult at Landsberg  
here  
(Which seems to be the truth, despite this  
man),  
And Dupont hard upon us at Albeck,  
With Ney not far from Günzburg ; some-  
where here,  
Or further down the river, lurking Lannes,  
Our game's to draw off southward — if we can.

MACK

I have it. This we'll do. You, Jellachich,  
Unite with Spangen's troops at Memmingen,  
To fend off mischief there. And you, Riesc,  
Will make your utmost haste to occupy  
The bridge and upper ground at Elchingen,  
And all along the left bank of the stream,  
Till you observe whereon to concentrate  
And sever their connections. I couch here,  
And hold the city till the Russians come.

A GENERAL (in a low voice)

Disjunction seems of all expedients worst:  
If any stay, then stay should every man,  
Gather, inlace, and close up hip to hip,  
And perk and bristle hedgehog-like with  
spines!

MACK

The conference is ended, friends, I say,  
And orders will be issued here forthwith.

Guns heard.

AN OFFICER

Surely that's from the Michaelsberg above us?

MACK

Never care. Here we stay. In five more days  
The Russians hail, and we regain our bays.

[Exeunt severally.]

## SCENE IV

BEFORE ULM. THE SAME DAY

A high wind prevails, and rain falls in torrents. An elevated terrace near Elchingen forms the foreground.

## DUMB SHOW

From the terrace BONAPARTE surveys and dictates operations against the entrenched heights of the Michaelsberg that rise in the middle distance on the right above the city. Through the gauze of descending waters the French soldiery can be discerned climbing to the attack under NEY.

They slowly advance, recede, re-advance, halt. A time of suspense follows. Then they are seen in a state of irregular movement, even confusion; but in the end they carry the heights with the bayonet.

Below the spot whereon NAPOLÉON and his staff are gathered, glistening wet and plastered with mud, obtrudes on the left the village of Elchingen, now in the hands of the French. Its white-walled monastery, its bridge over the Danube, recently broken by the enemy under NEY, wear a desolated look, and the stream, which is swollen by the rainfall and rasped by the storm, seems wanly to sympathize.

Anon shells are dropped by the French from the summits they have gained into the city below. A bomb from an Austrian battery falls near NAPOLÉON, and in bursting raises a fountain of mud. The Emperor retreats with his officers to a less conspicuous position.

Meanwhile LANNES advances from a position near NAPOLÉON till his columns reach the top of the Frauenberg hard by. The united corps of LANNES and NEY

descend on the inner slope of the heights towards the city walls, in the rear of the retreating Austrians. One of the French columns scales a bastion, but NAPOLÉON orders the assault to be discontinued, and with the wane of day the spectacle disappears.

## SCENE V

### THE SAME. THE MICHAELSBERG

A chilly but rainless noon three days later. At the back of the scene, northward, rise the Michaelsberg heights; below stretches the panorama of the city and the Danube. On a secondary eminence forming a spur of the upper hill, a fire of logs is burning, the foremost group beside it being NAPOLÉON and his staff, the latter in gorgeous uniform, the former in his shabby greatcoat and plain turned-up hat, walking to and fro with his hands behind him, and occasionally stopping to warm himself. The French infantry are drawn up in a dense array at the back of these.

The whole Austrian garrison of Ulm marches out of the city gate opposite NAPOLÉON. GENERAL MACK is at the head, followed by GUILAY, GOTTESHEIM, KLENAU, LICHTENSTEIN, and many other officers, who advance to BONAPARTE and deliver their swords.

MACK

Behold me, Sire. Mack the unfortunate!

NAPOLÉON

War, General, ever has its ups and downs,  
And you must take the better and the worse,

As impish chance or destiny ordains.  
Come near and warm you here. A glowing  
fire  
Is life on these depressing, mired, moist days  
Of smitten leaves down-dropping clammily,  
And toadstools like the putrid lungs of men.

(To his lieutenants)

Cause them to stand to right and left of me.

The Austrian officers arrange themselves as directed, and the body of the Austrians now file past their Conqueror, laying down their arms as they approach; some with angry gestures and words, others in moody silence.

Listen, I pray you, Generals gathered here.  
I tell you frankly that I know not why  
Your master wages this wild war with me.  
I know not what he seeks by such injustice,  
Unless to give me practice in my trade —  
That of a soldier — whereto I was bred:  
Deemed he my craft might slip from me,  
unplied?  
Let him now own me still a dab therein!

MACK

Permit me, your Imperial Majesty,  
To speak one word in answer; which is this,  
No war was wished for by my Emperor:  
Russia constrained him to it!



## NAPOLÉON

If that be,

You are no more a European power. —  
 I would point out to him that my resources  
 Are not confined to these my musters here ;  
 My prisoners of war, in route for France,  
 Will see some marks of my resources there !  
 Two hundred thousand volunteers, right fit,  
 Will join my standards at a single nod,  
 And in six weeks prove soldiers to the bone,  
 Whilst your recruits, compulsion's scavengings,  
 Can scarce become sound warriors in long  
 years.

But I want nothing on this Continent :  
 The English only are my enemies.  
 Ships, colonies, and commerce I desire,  
 Yea, therewith to advantage you as me.  
 Let me then charge your Emperor, my  
 brother,  
 To turn his feet the shortest way to peace. —  
 All states must have an end, the weak, the  
 strong ;  
 Ay ; even may fall the dynasty of Lorraine !

The filing past and laying down of arms by the  
 Austrian army continues with monotonous regularity, as  
 if it would never end.

NAPOLÉON (in a murmur, after a while)

Well, what cares England ! She has won  
 her game ;  
 I have unlearnt to threaten her from Boulogne.

Her gold it is that forms the weft of this  
 Fair tapestry of armies marshalled here!  
 Likewise of Russia's, drawing steadily nigh.  
 But they may see what these see, by and by.

### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*So let him speak, the while we clearly sight him  
 Moved like a figure on a lantern-slide.  
 Which, much amazing uninitiate eyes,  
 The all-compelling crystal pane but drags  
 Whither the showman wills.*

### SPIRIT IRONIC

*And yet, my friend,  
 The Will Itself might smile at this collapse  
 Of Austria's men-at-arms, so drolly done;  
 Even as, in your phantasmagoric show,  
 The deft manipulator of the slide  
 Might smile at his own art.*

### CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Ah, no: ah, no!  
 It is impassible as glacial snow.—  
 Within the Great Unshaken  
 These painted shapes awaken  
 A lesser thrill than doth the gentle lave  
 Of yonder bank by Danube's wandering wave  
 Within the Schwarzwald heights that give it  
 flow!*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But O, the intolerable antilogy  
Of making figments feel!*

## SPIRIT IRONIC

*Logic's in that.*

*It does not, I must own, quite play the game.*

## CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial music)

*And this day wins for Ulm a shady fame,  
Which centuries shall not bleach from her old  
name!*

The procession of Austrians continues till the scene is hidden by clouds.

## SCENE VI

## LONDON. SPRING GARDENS

Before LORD MALMESBURY'S house, on a Sunday morning in the same autumn. Idlers pause and gather in the background.

PITT enters, and meets LORD MULGRAVE.

## MULGRAVE

Good day, Pitt. Ay, these leaves that skim  
the ground  
With withered voices, hint that sunshine-  
time  
Is well-nigh past. — And so the game's begun

Between him and the Austro-Russian force,  
 As second movement in the faceabout  
 From Boulogne shore, with which he has  
     hocussed us? —  
 What has been heard on't? Have they  
     clashed as yet?

PITT

The Emperor Francis, partly at my instance,  
 Has thrown the chief command on General  
     Mack,  
 A man most capable and far of sight.  
 He centres by the Danube-bank at Ulm,  
 A town well-walled, and firm for leaning on  
 To intercept the French in their advance  
 From the Black Forest towards the Russian  
     troops  
 Approaching from the east. If Bonaparte  
 Sustain his marches at the break-neck speed  
 That all report, they must have met ere now.  
 — There is a rumour . . . which I don't believe!

MULGRAVE

You still have faith in Mack as strategist?  
 There have been doubts of his far-sightedness.

PITT (hastily)

I know, I know. — I am calling here at  
     Malmesbury's  
 At a somewhat unceremonious time  
 To ask his help to translate this Dutch print

The post has brought. Malmesbury is great  
at Dutch,  
Learning it long at Leyden, years ago.

He draws a newspaper from his pocket, unfolds it,  
and glances it down.

There's news here unintelligible to me  
Upon the very matter! You'll come in?

They call at LORD MALMESBURY'S. He meets them  
in the hall, and welcomes them with an apprehensive  
look of foreknowledge.

PITT

Pardon this early call. The packet's in,  
And brings me this unreadable Dutch paper.  
So, as the offices are closed to-day,  
I have brought it round to you.

(Handing the paper.)

What does it say?  
For God's sake, read it out. You know the  
tongue.

MALMESBURY (with hesitation)

I have glanced it through already — more than  
once —

A copy having reached me, too, just now . . .  
We are in the presence of a great disaster!  
See here. It says that Mack, enclooped in  
Ulm

By Bonaparte — from four sides closing  
round —

Capitulated, and with all his force  
Laid down his arms before his conqueror.

PITT's face changes. A silence.

MULGRAVE

Outrageous! Ignominy unparalleled!

PITT

By God, my lord, these statements must  
be false!

These foreign prints are trustless as Cheap  
Jack

Dumfounding yokels at a country fair.

I heed no word of it. — Impossible.

What! Eighty thousand Austrians, nigh in  
touch

With Russia's levies that Kutúzof leads,  
To lay down arms before the war's begun?  
'Tis too much!

MALMESBURY

But I fear it is too true!

Note the assevered source of the report —  
One beyond thought of minters of mock tales.  
The writer adds that military wits  
Cry that the Little Corporal now makes war  
In a new way, using his soldiers' legs

And not their arms, to bring him victory.  
Ha-ha! The joke must sting the Corporal's  
foes.

PITT (after a pause)

O vacillating Prussia! Had she moved,  
Had she but planted one foot firmly down,  
All this had been averted. — I must go.  
'Tis sure, 'tis sure, I labour but in vain!

MALMESBURY accompanies him to the door, and PITT walks away disquietedly towards Whitehall, the other two regarding him as he goes.

MULGRAVE

Too swiftly he declines to feebleness,  
And these things well might shake a stouter  
frame!

MALMESBURY

Of late the burden of all Europe's cares,  
Of hiring and maintaining half her troops,  
His single pair of shoulders has upborne,  
Thanks to the obstinacy of the King. —  
His thin, strained face, his ready irritation,  
Are ominous signs. He may not be for long.

MULGRAVE

He alters fast, indeed, — as do events.

## MALMESBURY

His labour's lost ; and all our money gone !  
It looks as if this doughty coalition  
On which we have lavished so much pay and  
pains  
Would end in wreck.

## MULGRAVE

All is not over yet ;  
The gathering Russian forces are unbroke.

## MALMESBURY

Well ; we shall see. Should Boney vanquish  
these,  
And silence all resistance on that side,  
His move will then be backward to Boulogne,  
And so upon us.

## MULGRAVE

Nelson to our defence !

## MALMESBURY

Ay ; where is Nelson ? Faith, by this late  
time  
He may be sodden ; churned in Biscay swirls ;  
Or blown to polar bears by south-west gales ;  
Or sleeping amorously in some calm cave  
On the Canaries' or Atlantis' shore.



Upon the bosom of his Dido dear,  
For all that we know! Never a sound of  
him  
Since passing Portland one September day —  
To make for Cadiz; so 'twas then believed.

## MULGRAVE

He's staunch. He's watching, or I am much  
deceived.

MULGRAVE departs. MALMESBURY goes within. The  
scene shuts.

## ACT FIFTH

### SCENE I

#### OFF CAPE TRAFALGAR

A bird's-eye view of the sea discloses itself. It is daybreak, and the broad face of the ocean is fringed on its eastern edge by the Cape and the Spanish shore. On the rolling surface immediately beneath the eye, ranged more or less in two parallel lines running north and south, one group from the twain standing off somewhat, are the vessels of the combined French and Spanish navies, whose canvases, as the sun edges upward, shine in its rays like satin.

On the western horizon two columns of ships appear in full sail, small as moths to the aerial vision. They are bearing down towards the combined squadrons.

RECORDING ANGEL I (intoning from his book)

*At last Villeneuve accepts the sea and fate,  
Despite the Cadiz council called of late,  
Whereat his stoutest captains — men the first  
To do all mortals durst —  
Willing to sail, and bleed, and bear the worst,  
Short of cold suicide, did yet opine*

*That plunging 'mid those teeth of treble line  
In jaws of oaken wood  
Held open by the English navy  
With suasive breadth and artful modesty,  
Would smack of purposeless foolhardihood.*

## RECORDING ANGEL II

*But word came, writ in mandatory mood,  
To put from Cadiz, gain Toulon, and straight  
At a said sign on Italy operate.  
Moreover that Villeneuve, arrived as planned,  
Would find Rosily in supreme command.—  
Gloomy Villeneuve grows rash, and, darkly brave,  
Leaps to meet war, storm, Nelson—even the  
grave.*

## SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Ere the concussion hurtle, draw abreast  
Of the sea.*

## SEMICHORUS II

*Where Nelson's hulls are rising from the west,  
Silently.*

## SEMICHORUS I

*Each linen wing outspread, each man and lad  
Sworn to be*

## SEMICHORUS II

*Amid the vanmost, or for Death, or glad  
Victory!*

The point of sight descends till it is near the deck of the "Bucentaure," the flag-ship of VILLENEUVE. Present thereon are the ADMIRAL, his FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON, other naval officers and seamen.

## MAGENDIE

All night we have read their signals in the air,  
Whereby the peering frigates of their van  
Have told them of our trend.

## VILLENEUVE

The enemy

Makes threat as though to throw him on our  
stern :

Signal the fleet to wear ; bid Gravina  
To come in from manœuvring with his  
twelve,  
And range himself in line.

Officers murmur.

I say again

Bid Gravina draw hither with his twelve,  
And signal all to wear ! — and come upon  
The larboard tack with every bow anorth ! —  
So we make Cadiz in the worst event,  
And patch our rags up there. As we head now  
Our only practicable thoroughfare  
Is through Gibraltar Strait — a fatal door !

Signal to close the line and leave no gaps.  
Remember, too, what I have already told :  
Remind them of it now. They must not  
pause

For signallings from me amid a strife  
Whose chaos may prevent my clear discern-  
ment,

Or may forbid my signalling at all.

The voice of honour then becomes the chief's ;  
Listen they thereto, and set every stitch  
To heave them on into the fiercest fight.

Now I will sum up all : heed well the charge ;

EACH CAPTAIN, PETTY OFFICER, AND MAN

IS ONLY AT HIS POST WHEN UNDER FIRE.

The ships of the whole fleet turn their bows from south to north as directed, and close up in two parallel curved columns, the concave side of each column being towards the enemy, and the interspaces of the first column being, in general, opposite the hulls of the second.

AN OFFICER (straining his eyes towards the  
English fleet)

How they skip on ! Their overcrowded sails  
Bulge like the bladders in a tripe-man's shop  
The market-morning after slaughter-day !

PETTY OFFICER (aside)

It's morning before slaughter-day with us,  
I make so bold to think !

The English Admiral is seen to be signalling to his fleet. The signal is : " ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY." A loud cheering from all the English ships comes undulating on the wind when the signal is read.

## VILLENEUVE

They are signalling too. — Well, business soon begins!

You will reserve your fire. And be it known That we display no admirals' flags at all Until the action's past. 'Twill puzzle them, And be to our advantage when we close. — Yes, they are double-ranked, I think, like us; But we shall see anon.

## MAGENDIE

The foremost one  
Makes for the "Santa Ana." In such case  
The "Fougueux" might assist her.

## VILLENEUVE

Be it so —  
There's time enough. — Our ships will be in  
place,  
And ready to speak back in iron words  
When theirs cry Hail! in the same sort of  
voice.

They prepare to receive the northernmost column of the enemy's ships headed by the "Victory," trying the distance by an occasional single shot. During their suspense a discharge is heard southward, and turning they behold COLLINGWOOD at the head of his column in the "Royal Sovereign," just engaging with the Spanish "Santa Ana." Meanwhile the "Victory" draws still

nearer, preserving silence with brazen sang-froid. At a concerted moment full broadsides are discharged into her simultaneously from the "Bucentaure," the "Santísima Trinidad," and the "Redoutable."

When the smoke clears the "Victory's" mizzen-topmast, with spars and a quantity of rigging, is seen to have fallen, her wheel to be shot away, and her deck encumbered with dead and wounded men.

VILLENEUVE

'Tis well! But see; their course is undelayed,  
And still they near in clenched audacity!

DAUDIGNON

This northmost column bears upon our ship.  
Their prows will pierce us beamwards. That's  
the aim.

MAGENDIE

Which aim brave Lucas o' the "Redoutable"  
Most gallantly bestirs him to outscheme. —  
See, how he strains, that on his timbers fall  
Blows that were destined for his Admiral!

During this the French ship "Redoutable" is moving forward to interpose itself between the approaching "Victory" and the "Bucentaure."

VILLENEUVE

Now comes it! The "Santísima Trinidad,"  
The old "Redoutable's" hard sides, and ours,  
Will take the weight of this bombastic blow.  
Your grapnels and your boarding-hatchets —  
ready!

We throw our eagle on the English deck,  
And swear to fetch it!

CREW

Aye! We swear. Huzza!  
Long live the Emperor!

But the "Victory" suddenly swerves to the rear of the "Bucentaure," and crossing her stern-waters, discharges a broadside into her and the "Redoutable" endwise.

The point of view changes.

SCENE II

THE SAME. THE QUARTER-DECK OF THE  
"VICTORY"

The van of each division of the English fleet has drawn to the windward side of the combined fleets of the enemy, and broken their order, the "Victory" being now parallel to and alongside the "Redoutable," the "Téméraire" taking up a station on the other side of that ship. The "Bucentaure" and the "Santísima Trinidad" become jammed together a little way ahead. A smoke and din of cannonading prevail, amid which the studding-sail booms are shot away.

NELSON, HARDY, BLACKWOOD, SECRETARY SCOTT, LIEUTENANT PASCO, BURKE the purser, CAPTAIN ADAIR of the Marines, and other officers are on or near the quarter-deck.



## NELSON

See, there, that noble fellow Collingwood,  
How straight he helms his ship into the  
fire!—

Now you'll haste back to yours (to Blackwood).

— We must henceforth

Trust to the Great Disposer of events,  
And justice of our cause! . . .

[BLACKWOOD leaves.

The battle grows hotter. A double-headed shot cuts down seven or eight marines on the "Victory's" poop.

Captain Adair, part those marines of yours,  
And hasten to disperse them round the ship.—  
Your place is down below, Burke, not up  
here;

Ah, yes; like David you would see the  
battle!

A heavy discharge of musket-shot comes from the tops of the "Santisima Trinidad." ADAIR and PASCO fall. Another swathe of marines is mowed down by chain-shot.

## SCOTT

My lord, I use to you the utmost prayers  
That I have liberty to shape in words:  
Remove your stars and orders, I would beg;  
That shot was aimed at you.

## NELSON

They were awarded to me as an honour,  
And shall I do despite to those who prize me,

And slight their gifts? No, I will die with  
them,  
If die I must.

He walks up and down with HARDY.

HARDY

At least let's put you on  
Your old greatcoat, my lord — (the air is  
keen). —  
'Twill cover all. So while you still retain  
Your dignities, you baulk these deadly aims.

NELSON

Thank 'ee, good friend. But no, — I haven't  
time,  
I do assure you — not a trice to spare,  
As you well see.

A few minutes later SCOTT falls dead, a bullet having pierced his skull. Immediately after a shot passes between the Admiral and the Captain, tearing the in-step of Hardy's shoe, and striking away the buckle. They shake off the dust and splinters scattered over them. NELSON glances round, and perceives what has happened to his secretary.

NELSON

Poor Scott, too, carried off! Warm work  
this, Hardy;  
Too warm to go on long.

HARDY

I think so, too ;  
Their lower ports are blocked against our  
hull,  
And our charge now is less. Each shot so  
near  
Sets their old wood on fire.

NELSON

Ay, rotten as peat.  
What's that? I think she has struck, or  
pretty nigh !

A cracking of musketry.

HARDY

Not yet. — Those small-arm men there, in her  
tops,  
Thin our crew fearfully. Now, too, our guns  
Have to be dipped full down, or they would  
rake  
The "Téméraire" there on the other side.

NELSON

True. — While you deal good measure out to  
these,  
Keep slapping at those giants over here —  
The "Trinidad," I mean, and the "Bucen-  
taure,"  
To win'ard — swelling up so pompously.

HARDY

I'll see no slackness shall be shown that way.

They part and go in their respective directions. Gunners, naked to the waist and reeking with sweat, are now in swift action on the several decks, and firemen carry buckets of water hither and thither. The killed and wounded thicken around, and are being lifted and examined by the surgeons. NELSON and HARDY meet again.

NELSON

Bid still the firemen bring more bucketfuls,  
And dash the water into each new hole  
That our shots make in the "Redoutable,"  
Or we shall all be set ablaze together.

HARDY

Let me once more advise, entreat, my lord,  
That you do not expose yourself so clearly.  
Those fellows in the mizzen-top up there  
Are peppering round you quite perceptibly.

NELSON

Now, Hardy, don't offend me. They can't  
aim;  
They only set their own rent sails on fire.—  
But if they could, I would not hide a button  
To save ten lives like mine. I have no cause  
To prize it, I assure 'ee.— Ah, look there,  
One of the women hit,—and badly, too.

Poor wench ! Let some one take her quickly  
down.

HARDY

My lord, each humblest sojourner on the seas,  
Dock-labourer, lame longshore-man, bowed  
bargee,  
Sees it as policy to shield his life  
For those dependent on him. Much more,  
then,  
Should one upon whose priceless presence here  
Such issues hang, so many strivers lean,  
Use average circumspection at an hour  
So critical for us all.

NELSON

Ay, ay. Yes, yes ;  
I know your meaning, Hardy ; and I know  
That you disguise as frigid policy  
What really is your honest love of me.  
But, faith, I have had my day. My work's  
nigh done ;  
I serve all interests best by chancing it  
Here with the commonest. — Ah, their heavy  
guns  
Are silenced every one ! Thank God for  
that.

HARDY

'Tis so. They only use their small arms now.

He goes to larboard to see what is progressing on  
that side between his ship and the " Santísima Trinidad."

OFFICER (to a seaman)

Swab down these stairs. The mess of blood  
upon 'em  
Makes 'em so slippery that one's like to fall  
In carrying the wounded men below.

While CAPTAIN HARDY is still a little way off, LORD NELSON turns to walk aft, when a ball from one of the muskets in the mizzen-top of the "Redoutable" enters his left shoulder. He falls upon his face on the deck. HARDY looks round, and sees what has happened.

HARDY (hastily)

Ah — what I feared! . . .

He goes towards NELSON, who in the meantime has been lifted by SERGEANT-MAJOR SECKER and two seamen.

NELSON

Hardy, I think they've done for me at last!

HARDY

I hope not!

NELSON

Yes. My backbone is shot through.  
I have not long to live.

The men proceed to carry him below.

Those tiller ropes  
They've shot away, get instantly repaired!

At sight of him borne along wounded there is great agitation among the crew.

Cover my face. There will no good be done  
By drawing their attention off to me.  
Bear me along, good fellows; I am but one  
Among the many darkened here to-day!

He is carried on to the cockpit over the crowd of dead and wounded.

(To the Chaplain)

Doctor, I'm gone. I am good for none but  
you.

HARDY (remaining behind)

Hills, go to Collingwood and let him know  
That we've no Admiral here.

He passes on.

A LIEUTENANT

Now quick and pick him off who did the  
deed —  
That white-bloused man there in the mizzen-  
top.

POLLARD, a midshipman (shooting)

No sooner said than done. A pretty aim!

The Frenchman falls dead upon the poop.

The spectacle seems now to become enveloped in smoke, and the point of view changes.

## SCENE III

THE SAME. ON BOARD THE "BUCENTAURE"

The bowsprit of the French Admiral's ship is stuck fast in the stern-gallery of the "Santísima Trinidad," the starboard side of the "Bucentaure" being shattered by shots from two English three-deckers which are pounding her on that hand. The poop is also reduced to ruin by two other English ships that are attacking her from behind.

On the quarter-deck are ADMIRAL VILLENEUVE, the FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANTS DAUDIGNON, FOURNIER, and others, anxiously occupied. The whole crew is in desperate action of battle and stumbling among the dead and dying, who have fallen too rapidly to be carried below.

VILLENEUVE

We shall be crushed if matters go on thus. —

Direct the "Trinidad" to let her drive,  
That this foul tangle may be loosened clear.

DAUDIGNON

It has been tried, sir; but she cannot move.

VILLENEUVE

Then signal to the "Hero" that she strive  
Once more to drop this way.



## MAGENDIE

We may make signs,  
 But in the thickened air what signal's  
 marked! —  
 'Tis done, however.

## VILLENEUVE

The "Redoutable"  
 And "Victory" there, — they grip in dying  
 throes!  
 Something's amiss on board the English ship.  
 Surely the Admiral's fallen?

## A PETTY OFFICER

Sir, they say  
 That he was shot some hour, or half, ago. —  
 With dandyism raised to godlike pitch  
 He stalked the deck in all his jewellery,  
 And so was hit.

## MAGENDIE

Then Fortune turns her face!  
 We have scotched England in dispatching him.  
 Yes! He commands no more; and Lucas,  
 seeing,  
 Is taking steps to board. Look, spars are  
 laid,  
 And his best men are mounting at his heels.

A crash is heard.

## VILLENEUVE

Ah, God — he is too late! Whence came  
 that stroke  
 Of heavy grape? The smoke prevents my  
 seeing  
 But at brief whiles. — The boarding band has  
 fallen,  
 Fallen almost to a man! — 'Twas well essayed.

## MAGENDIE

That's from their "Téméraire," whose vicious  
 broadside  
 Has cleared poor Lucas' decks.

## VILLENEUVE

And Lucas, too.  
 I see him no more there. His red planks show  
 Three hundred dead if one. Now for ourselves!

Four of the English three-deckers have gradually closed round the "Bucentaure," whose bowsprit still sticks fast in the gallery of the "Santísima Trinidad." A broadside comes from one of the English, resulting in worse havoc on the "Bucentaure." The main and mizzen masts of the latter fall, and the boats are beaten to pieces. A raking fire of musketry follows from the attacking ships, to which the "Bucentaure" heroically continues still to keep up a reply.

CAPTAIN MAGENDIE falls wounded. His place is taken by LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON.

## VILLENEUVE

Now that the smoke has lessened, hoist the  
signals

Upon our only mast, and tell the van  
At once to wear, and come into the fire.

(Aside) If it be true that, as *he* sneers, success  
Demands of me but cool audacity,  
To-day shall leave him nothing to desire!

Musketry continues. DAUDIGNON falls. He is removed, his post being taken by LIEUTENANT FOURNIER. Another crash comes, and the deck is suddenly encumbered with rigging.

## FOURNIER

There goes our foremast! How for signalling now?

## VILLENEUVE

To try that longer, Fournier, is in vain  
Upon this haggard, scorched, and ravaged  
hulk,

Her decks all reeking with such gory shows,  
Her starboard side in rents, her stern nigh  
gone!

How does she keep afloat? —

“Bucentaure,” O unlucky good old ship!  
My part in you is played. Ay — I must go;  
I must tempt Fate elsewhere, — if but a boat  
Can bear me through this wreckage to the  
van.

## FOURNIER

Our boats are stove in, or as full of holes  
As the cook's skimmer, from their cursèd  
balls!

Musketry. VILLENEUVE's Head-of-Staff, DE PRIGNY, falls wounded, and many additional men. VILLENEUVE glances troublously from ship to ship of his fleet.

## VILLENEUVE

How hideous are the waves, so pure this  
dawn!—

Red-frothed; and friends and foes all mixed  
therein.—

Can we in some way hail the "Trinidad"  
And get a boat from her?

They attempt to attract the attention of the  
"Santisima Trinidad" by shouting.

Impossible;  
As well try holloing to the antipodes!—  
So here I am. The bliss of Nelson's end  
Will not be mine; his full refulgent eye  
Becomes my midnight! Well; the fleets  
shall see  
That I can yield my cause with dignity.

The "Bucentaure" strikes her flag.

A boat then puts off from the English ship "Conqueror," and VILLENEUVE, having surrendered his sword, is taken out from the "Bucentaure." But being unable

to regain her own ship, the boat is picked up by the "Mars," and the French Admiral is received aboard her.

The point of view changes.

## SCENE IV

THE SAME. THE COCKPIT OF THE "VICTORY"

A din of trampling and dragging overhead, which is accompanied by a continuous ground-bass roar from the guns of the warring fleets, culminating at times in loud concussions. The wounded are lying around in rows for treatment, some groaning, some silently dying, some dead. The gloomy atmosphere of the low-beamed deck is pervaded by a thick haze of smoke, powdered wood, and other dust, and is heavy with the fumes of gunpowder and candle-grease, the odour of drugs and cordials, and the smell from abdominal wounds.

NELSON, his face now pinched and wan with suffering, is lying undressed in a midshipman's berth, dimly lit by a lantern. Dr. BEATTY, Dr. MAGRATH, the Rev. Dr. SCOTT the Chaplain, BURKE the Purser, the Steward, and a few others stand around.

MAGRATH (in a low voice)

Poor Ram, and poor Tom Whipple, have just gone.

BEATTY

There was no hope for them.

NELSON (brokenly)

Who have just died?

BEATTY

Two who were badly hit by now, my lord ;  
Lieutenant Ram and Mr. Whipple.

NELSON

Ah! —

So many lives — in such a glorious cause. . . .  
I join them soon, soon, soon! — O where is  
Hardy?

Will nobody bring Hardy to me — none?  
He must be killed, too. Surely Hardy's  
dead?

A MIDSHIPMAN

He's coming soon, my lord. The constant  
call  
On his full heed of this most mortal fight  
Keeps him from hastening hither as he would.

NELSON

I'll wait, I'll wait. I should have thought  
of it.

Presently HARDY comes down. NELSON and he grasp  
hands.

Hardy, how goes the day with us and  
England?

HARDY

Well; very well, thank God for't, my dear  
lord.

Villeneuve their Admiral has this moment  
struck,

And put himself aboard the "Conqueror."  
Some fourteen of their first-rates, or about,  
Thus far we've got. The said "Bucentaure"  
chief:

The "Santa Ana," the "Redoutable,"  
The "Fougueux," the "Santísima Trinidad,"  
"San Augustino," "San Francisco," "Aigle";  
And our old "Swiftsure," too, we've grappled  
back,

To every seaman's joy. But now their van  
Has tacked to bear round on the "Victory"  
And crush her by sheer weight of wood and  
brass:

Three of our best I am therefore calling up,  
And make no doubt of worsting theirs, and  
France.

#### NELSON

That's well. I swore for twenty. — But it's  
well.

#### HARDY

We'll have 'em yet! But without you, my  
lord,

We have to make slow plodding to the deeds  
That sprung by inspiration ere you fell;  
And on this ship the more particularly.

## NELSON

No, Hardy. --- Ever 'twas your settled fault  
So modestly to whittle down your worth.  
But I saw stuff in you which admirals need  
When, taking thought, I chose the "Victory's"  
    keel  
To do my business with these Frenchmen in.  
A business finished now, for me! — Good  
    friend,  
Slow shades are creeping on me. . . . I scarce  
    see you.

## HARDY

The smoke from ships upon our win'ard side,  
And the dust raised by their worm-eaten hulks,  
When our balls touch 'em, blind the eyes, in  
    truth.

## NELSON

No; it is not that dust; 'tis dust of death  
That darkens me.

A shock overhead. HARDY goes up. One or two  
other officers go up, and by and by return.

What was that extra noise?

## OFFICER

The "Formidable" passed us by, my lord,  
And thumped a stunning broadside into us. —



But, on their side, the "Hero's" captain's  
fallen ;  
The "Algeciras" has been boarded, too,  
By Captain Tyler, and the captain shot :  
Admiral Gravina desperately holds out ;  
They say he's lost an arm.

NELSON

And we ourselves —  
Who have we lost on board here? Nay, but  
tell me!

BEATTY

Besides poor Scott, my lord, and Charles  
Adair,  
Lieutenant Ram, and Whipple, captain's clerk,  
There's Smith, and Palmer, midshipmen, just  
killed,  
And fifty odd of seamen and marines.

NELSON

Poor youngsters! Scarred old Nelson joins  
you soon.

BEATTY

And wounded: Bligh, lieutenant; Pasco,  
too,  
And Reeves, and Peake, lieutenants of marines,  
And Rivers, Westphall, Bulkeley, midshipmen,

With, of the crew, a hundred odd just now,  
Unreckoning those late fallen not brought  
below.

## BURKE

That fellow in the mizzen-top, my lord,  
Who made it his affair to wing you thus,  
We took good care to settle; and he fell  
Like an old rook, smack from his perch,  
stone dead.

## NELSON

'Twas not worth while! — He was, no doubt,  
a man  
Who in simplicity and sheer good faith  
Strove but to serve his country. Rest be to  
him!  
And may his wife, his friends, his little ones,  
If such he had, be tided through their loss,  
And soothed amid the sorrow brought by me.

HARDY re-enters.

Who's that? Ah — here you come! How,  
Hardy, now?

## HARDY

The Spanish Admiral's rumoured to be  
wounded,  
We know not with what truth. But, be as  
'twill,

He sheers away with all he could call round,  
And some few frigates, straight to Cadiz port.

A violent explosion is heard above the confused noises  
on deck. A midshipman goes above and returns.

MIDSHIPMAN (in the background)

It is the enemy's first-rate, the "Achille,"  
Blown to a thousand atoms! — While on fire,  
Before she burst, one of the women there,  
Desperate for life, climbed from the gunroom  
port  
Upon the rudder-chains; pulled off her  
clothes,  
And swam for the "Pickle's" boat. Our  
men in charge,  
Seeing her great breasts bulging on the brine,  
Sang out, "A mermaid 'tis, by God!" —  
then rowed  
And hauled her in. —

BURKE

Such oddities intrude  
On death's grim hours!

MIDSHIPMAN

Meantime the "Achille" fought on,  
Even while the ship was blazing, knowing  
well  
The fire must reach their powder; which it  
did.

The spot is covered now with floating men,  
 Some whole, the main in parts; arms, legs,  
     trunks, heads,  
 Bobbing with tons of timber on the waves,  
 And splinters looped with entrails of the crew.

NELSON (arousing)

Our course will be to anchor. Let them  
 know.

HARDY

But let me ask, my lord, as I needs must,  
 Seeing your state, and that our work's not  
     done,  
 Shall I, from you, bid Admiral Collingwood  
 Take full on him the conduct of affairs?

NELSON (trying to raise himself)

Not while I live, I hope! No, Hardy; no.  
 Give Collingwood my order. Anchor all.

HARDY (hesitating)

You mean the signal's to be made forthwith?

NELSON

I do! — By God, if but our carpenter  
 Could rig me up a jury-backbone now,  
 To last one hour — until the battle's done,  
 I'd see to it! But here I am — stove in —

Broken — all logged and done for! Done,  
ay done!

BEATTY (returning from the other wounded)

My lord, I must implore you to lie calm!  
You shorten what at best may not be long.

NELSON (exhausted)

I know, I know, good Beatty! Thank you well.  
Hardy, I was impatient. Now I am still.  
Sit here a moment, if you have time to spare.

BEATTY and the others stand back, and the two abide in silence, except for the trampling overhead and the moans from adjoining berths. NELSON is apparently in less pain, seeming to doze.

NELSON (suddenly)

What are you thinking, that you speak no  
word?

HARDY (waking from a short reverie)

Thoughts all confused, my lord:—their needs  
on deck,

Your own sad state, and your unrivalled past;

Mixed up with flashes of old things afar —

Old childish things at home, down Wessex way,

In the snug village under Blackdon Hill

Where I was born. The tumbling stream,

the garden,

The placid look of the grey dial there,

Marking unconsciously this bloody hour,  
And the red apples on my father's trees,  
Just now full ripe.

NELSON

Ay, thus do little things  
Steal into my mind, too. But ah, my heart  
Knows not your calm philosophy! — There's  
one —

Come nearer to me, Hardy. — One of all,  
As you well guess, pervades my memory now;  
She, and my daughter — I speak freely to you.  
'Twas good I made that codicil this morning  
That you and Blackwood witnessed. Now  
she rests

Safe on the nation's honour. . . . Let her have  
My hair, and the small treasured things I  
owned,

And take care of her, as you care for me!

HARDY promises.

NELSON (resuming in a murmur)

Does love die with our frame's decease, I  
wonder,

Or does it live on ever? . . .

A silence. BEATTY reapproaches.

HARDY

Now I'll leave,  
See if your order's gone, and then return.

NELSON (symptoms of death beginning to change his face)

Yes, Hardy; yes; I know it. You must go. —

Here we shall meet no more; since Heaven forbend

That care for me should keep you idle now,  
When all the ship demands you. Beatty, too,  
Go to the others who lie bleeding there;  
Them you can aid. To me you can give none!

My time here is the briefest. — If I live  
But long enough I'll anchor. . . . But — too late —

My anchoring's elsewhere ordered! . . . Kiss me, Hardy:

HARDY bends over him.

I'm satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty!

HARDY brushes his eyes with his hand, and withdraws to go above, pausing to look back before he finally disappears.

BEATTY (watching Nelson)

Ah. — Hush around! . . .

He's sinking. It is but a trifle now  
Of minutes with him. Stand you, please,  
aside,  
And give him air.

BEATTY, the Chaplain, MAGRATH the Steward, and attendants continue to regard NELSON. BEATTY looks at his watch.

BEATTY

Two hours and fifty minutes since he fell,  
And now he's going.

They wait. NELSON dies.

CHAPLAIN

Yes. . . . He has homed to where  
There's no more sea.

BEATTY

We'll let the Captain know,  
Who will confer with Collingwood at once.  
I must now turn to these.

He goes to another part of the cockpit, a midshipman ascends to the deck, and the scene overclouds.

CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*His thread was cut too slowly! When he fell,  
And bade his fame farewell,  
He might have passed, and shunned his long-  
drawn pain,  
Endured in vain, in vain!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Young Spirits, be not critical of That  
Which was before, and shall be after you!*



## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*But out of tune the Mode and meritless  
That quickens sense in shapes whom, thou hast  
said,*

*Necessitation sways! A life there was  
Among these self-same frail ones—Sophocles—  
Who visioned it too clearly, even the while  
He dubbed the Will “the gods.” Truly said  
he,*

*“Such gross injustice to their own creation  
Burdens the time with mournfulness for us,  
And for themselves with shame.”<sup>1</sup>— Things  
mechanized*

*By coils and pivots set to foreframed codes  
Would, in a thorough-sphered melodic rule,  
And governance of sweet consistency,  
Be cessed no pain, whose burnings would abide  
With That Which holds responsibility,  
Or inexist.*

## CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Yea, yea, yea!*

*Thus would the Mover pay*

*The score each puppet owes,*

*The Reaper reap what his contrivance sows!*

*Why make Life debtor when it did not buy?*

*Why wound so keenly Right that it would die?*

<sup>1</sup> Soph. *Trach.* 1266–72.

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, blame not! For what judgment can ye  
blame? —*

*In that immense unweeting Mind is shown  
One far above forethinking; purposive,  
Yet superconscious; a Clairvoyancy  
That knows not what It knows, yet works  
therewith. —*

*The cognizance ye mourn, Life's doom to feel,  
If I report it meetly, came unmeant,  
Emerging with blind gropes from impercipient  
By random sequence — luckless, tragic Chance,  
If ye will call it so. 'Twas needed not  
In the economy of Vitality,  
Which might have ever kept a sealed cognition  
As doth the Will Itself.*

## CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Yea, yea, yea;  
Your hasty judgments stay,  
Until the topmost cyme  
Have crowned the last entablature of Time.  
O heap not blame on that in-brooding Will;  
O pause, till all things all their days fulfil!*

## SCENE V

LONDON. THE GUILDHALL

A crowd of citizens has gathered outside to watch the carriages as they drive up and deposit guests invited to the Lord Mayor's banquet, for which event the Hall is brilliantly lit up within. A cheer rises when the equipage of any popular personage arrives at the door.

## FIRST CITIZEN

Well, well! Nelson is the man who ought to have been banqueted to-night. But he is coming to Town in a coach different from these!

## SECOND CITIZEN

Will they bring his poor splintered body home?

## FIRST CITIZEN

Yes. They say he's to be tombed in marble, at St. Paul's or Westminster. We shall see him if he laies in state. It will make a patriotic spectacle for a fine day.

## Boy

How can you see a dead man, father, after so long?

## FIRST CITIZEN

They'll embalm him, my boy, as they did all the great Egyptian admirals.

## BOY

His lady will be handy for that, won't she?

## FIRST CITIZEN

Don't yeh ask awkward questions.

## SECOND CITIZEN

Here's another coming!

## FIRST CITIZEN

That's my Lord Chancellor Eldon. Wot he'll say, and wot he'll look! — Mr. Pitt will be here soon.

## BOY

I don't like Billy. He killed Uncle John's parrot.

## SECOND CITIZEN

How may yeh maike that out, youngster?

## BOY

Mr. Pitt maide the war, and the war maide us want sailors; and Uncle John went for a

walk down Wapping High Street to talk to the pretty ladies one evening; and there was a press all along the river that night — a regular hot one — and Uncle John was carried on board a man-of-war to fight under Nelson; and nobody minded Uncle John's parrot, and it talked itself to death. So Mr. Pitt killed Uncle John's parrot; see it, sir?

### SECOND CITIZEN

You had better have a care of this boy, friend. His brain is too precious for the common risks of Cheapside. Not but wot he might as well have said Boney killed the parrot when he was about it. And as for Nelson — who's now sailing shinier seas than ours, if they've rubbed Her off his slate where he's gone to — the French papers say that our loss in him is greater than our gain in ships; so that logically the victory is theirs. Gad, sir, it's almost true!

A hurrahing is heard from Cheapside, and the crowd in that direction begins to hustle and show excitement.

### FIRST CITIZEN

He's coming, he's coming! Here, let me lift you up, my boy. — Why, they have taken out the horses, as I am man alive!

## SECOND CITIZEN

Pitt for ever ! — Why, here's a blade opening and shutting his mouth like the rest, but never a sound does he raise !

## THIRD CITIZEN

I've not too much breath to carry me through my day's work, so I can't afford to waste it in such luxuries as crying Hurrah to aristocrats. If yeh was ten yards off y'd think I was shouting as loud as any.

## SECOND CITIZEN

It's a very mean practice of yeh to husband yourself at such a time, and gape in dumb-show like a frog in Plaistow Marshes.

## THIRD CITIZEN

No, sir ; it's economy ; a very necessary instinct in these days of ghastly taxations to pay half the awmies in Europe ! In short, it is scarcely compass-mentass to do otherwise ! Somebody must save something, or the country will be as bankrupt as Mr. Pitt himself is, by all account ; though he don't look it just now.

PITT'S coach passes, drawn by a troop of running men and boys. The Prime Minister is seen within, a thin, erect, up-nosed figure, with a flush of excitement

on his usually pale face. The vehicle reaches the doorway to the Guildhall and halts with a jolt. PITT gets out shakily, and amid cheers enters the building.

#### FOURTH CITIZEN

Quite a triumphal entry. Such is power ;  
Now worshipped, now accursed ! The over-  
throw

Of all Pitt's European policy  
When his hired army and his chosen general  
Surrendered them at Ulm a month ago,  
Is now forgotten ! Ay ; this Trafalgar  
Will botch up many a ragged old repute,  
Make Nelson figure as domestic saint  
No less than country's saviour, Pitt exalt  
As Zenith-star of England's firmament,  
And uncurse all the bogglers of her weal  
At this adventurous time.

#### THIRD CITIZEN

Talk of Pitt being ill. He looks hearty  
as a buck.

#### FIRST CITIZEN

It's the news — no more. His spirits are  
up like a rocket for the moment.

#### Boy

Is it because Trafalgar is near Portingal  
that he loves Port wine ?

## SECOND CITIZEN

Ah, as I said, friend; this boy must go home and be carefully put to bed!

## FIRST CITIZEN

Well, wotever William's faults, it is a triumph for his virtues to-night!

PITT having disappeared, the Guildhall doors are closed, and the crowd slowly disperses, till in the course of an hour the street shows itself empty and dark, only a few oil lamps burning.

The SCENE OPENS, revealing the interior of the Guildhall, and the brilliant assembly of City magnates, Lords, and Ministers seated there, Mr. PITT occupying a chair of honour by the Lord Mayor. His health has been proposed as that of the Saviour of England, and drunk with acclamations.

PITT (standing up after repeated calls)

My lords and gentlemen:—You have toasted me

As one who has saved England and her cause.

I thank you, gentlemen, unfeignedly.

But—no man has saved England, let me say: England has saved herself, by her exertions: She will, I trust, save Europe by her example!

Loud applause, during which he sits down, rises, and sits down again. The scene then shuts, and the night without has place.



## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Those words of this man Pitt—his last large words,  
As I may prophesy—that ring to-night  
In their first mintage to the feasters here,  
Will spread with ageing, lodge, and crystallize,  
And stand embedded in the English tongue  
Till it grow thin, outworn, and cease to be.—  
So is't ordained by That Which all ordains;  
For words were never winged with apter grace,  
Or blent with happier choice of time and place,  
To hold the imagination of this strenuous race.*

SCENE VI<sup>1</sup>

## AN INN AT RENNES

Night. A sleeping-chamber. Two candles are burning near a bed in an alcove, and writing-materials are on the table.

The French admiral, VILLENEUVE, partly undressed, is pacing up and down the room.

## VILLENEUVE

These hauntings have at last nigh proved to me  
That this thing must be done. Illustrious foe  
And teacher, Nelson: blest and over blest  
In thy outgoing at the noon of strife  
When glory clasped thee round; while way-  
ward Death

---

<sup>1</sup> This scene is a little advanced in time, to include it in the Act to which it essentially belongs.

Refused my coaxings for the like-timed call!  
 Yet I did press where thickest missiles fell,  
 And both by precept and example showed  
 Where lay the line of duty, patriotism,  
 And honour, in that combat of despair.

He sees himself in the glass as he passes.

Unfortunate Villeneuve! — whom fate has  
 marked

To suffer for too firm a faithfulness. —  
 An Emperor's chide is a command to die. —  
 By him accursed, forsaken by my friend,  
 Awhile stern England's prisoner, then un-  
 loosed

Like some poor dolt unworth captivity,  
 Time serves me now for ceasing. Why not  
 cease? . . .

When, as Shades whisper in the chasmal night,  
 "Better, far better, no percipience here." —  
 O happy lack, that I should have no child  
 To come into my hideous heritage,  
 And groan beneath the burden of my name!<sup>1</sup>

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*I'll speak. His mood is ripe for such a parle.*

(Sending a voice into VILLENEUVE'S ear.)

*Thou dost divine the hour!*

---

<sup>1</sup> "Quel bonheur que je n'aie aucun enfant pour recueillir mon horrible héritage et qui soit chargé du poids de mon nom!" — (Extract from the poignant letter to his wife written on this night. — See Lanfrey, iii. 374.)

## VILLENEUVE

But those stern Nays,  
That heretofore were audible to me  
At each unhappy time I strove to pass?

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Have been annulled. The Will grants exit  
freely ;  
Yea, It says "Now." Therefore make now  
thy time.*

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

*May his sad sunken soul merge into nought  
Meekly and gently as a breeze at eve !*

## VILLENEUVE

From skies above me and the air around  
Those callings which so long have circled me  
At last do whisper "Now." Now it shall be !

He seals a letter, and addresses it to his wife ; then takes a dagger from his accoutrements that are hanging alongside, and, lying down upon his back on the bed, stabs himself determinedly in many places, leaving the weapon in the last wound.

Ungrateful master ; generous foes ; Farewell !

VILLENEUVE dies ; and the scene darkens.

## SCENE VII

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH  
WESSEX

The interior of the "Old Rooms" Inn. Boatmen and burghers are sitting in settles round the fire, smoking and drinking.

FIRST BURGHER

So they've brought him home at last, hey? And he's to be solemnized with a roaring funeral?

FIRST BOATMAN

Yes, thank God. . . . 'Tis better to lie dry than wet, if canst do it without stinking on the road gravewards. And they took care that he shouldn't.

SECOND BOATMAN

'Tis to be at Paul's; so they say that know. And the crew of the "Victory" have to walk in front, and Captain Hardy is to carry his stars and garters on a great velvet pincushion.

FIRST BURGHER

Where's the Captain now?

SECOND BOATMAN (nodding in the direction of Captain Hardy's house)

Down at home here with his sisters for a bit. I zid en a-walking with them on the Esplanade yesterday. He looks ten years older than 'a did when 'a went. Ay — he brought the galliant hero home!

SECOND BURGHER

Now how did they bring him home so that he could lie in state afterwards to the naked eye?

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, as they always do, — in a cask of sperrits.

SECOND BURGHER

Really, now!

FIRST BOATMAN (lowering his voice)

But what happened was this. They were a long time coming, owing to contrary winds, and the "Victory" being little more than a wreck. And grog ran short, because they'd used near all they had, to peckle his body in. So — they broached the Adm'l!

## SECOND BURGHER

How?

## FIRST BOATMAN

Well; the plain calendar o't is, that when he came to be unhooped, it was found that the crew had drunk him dry. What was the men to do? Broke down by the battle, and hardly able to keep afloat, 'twas a most defendable thing, and it fairly saved their lives. So he was their salvation after death as he had been in the fight. If he could have knowed it, 'twould have pleased him down to the ground! How 'a would have laughed through the spigot-hole: "Draw on, my hearties! Better I shrivel than you famish." Ha-ha!

## SECOND BURGHER

It may be defendable afloat; but it seems queer ashore.

## FIRST BOATMAN

Well, that's as I had it from one that knows—Bob Loveday of Overcombe—one of the "Victory" men that's going to walk in the funeral. However, let's touch a livelier string. Peter Green, strike up that new ballet that they've lately had prented

here, and were hawking about town last market-day.

### SECOND BOATMAN

With all my heart. Though my wynd-pipe's a bit clogged since the wars hev made beer so mortal small!

### SONG

#### I

In the wild October night-time, when the  
wind raved round the land,  
And the Back-sea<sup>1</sup> met the Front-sea, and  
our doors were blocked with sand,  
And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay,  
where bones of thousands are,  
We knew not what the day had done for us  
at Trafalgar.

(All) Had done,  
Had done,  
For us at Trafalgar!

#### II

“Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down  
we go!” one says, says he.  
We pulled; and bedtime brought the storm;  
but snug at home slept we.

---

<sup>1</sup> In those days the hind-part of the harbour, adjoining this scene, was so-called.

Yet all the while our gallants after fighting  
 through the day,  
 Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-  
 west of Cadiz Bay.

(All) The dark,  
 The dark,  
 Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay!

### III

The victors and the vanquished then the  
 storm it tossed and tore,  
 As hard they strove, those worn-out men,  
 upon that surly shore ;  
 Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes  
 from near and far,  
 Were rolled together on the deep that night  
 at Trafalgar.

(All) The deep,  
 The deep,  
 That night at Trafalgar !

The Cloud-curtain draws.

### CHORUS OF THE YEARS (aerial music)

*Meanwhile the month moves on to counter-deeds  
 Vast as the vainest needs,  
 And fiercely the predestined plot proceeds.*



## ACT SIXTH

### SCENE I

#### THE FIELD OF AUSTERLITZ. THE FRENCH POSITION

The night of the 1st of December, and the eve of the battle. The view is from the elevated position of the Emperor's bivouac. The air is keen and the sky clear, with stars, but the lower levels are covered with a white fog stretching like a sea, from which the heights protrude as dusky rocks.

To the left are discernible high and wooded hills. In the front mid-distance the plateau of Pratzen outstands, declining suddenly on the right to a low flat country covered with marshes and pools now mostly obscured. On the plateau itself are seen innumerable and varying lights, marking the bivouac of the centre divisions of the Austro-Russian army. Close to the foreground the fires of the French are burning, surrounded by soldiery. The invisible presence of the countless thousands of massed humanity that compose the two armies makes itself felt indefinitely.

The tent of NAPOLÉON rises nearest at hand, with sentinel and other military figures looming around, and saddled horses held by attendants. The accents of the Emperor are audible, through the canvas from inside, dictating a proclamation.

## VOICE OF NAPOLÉON

“Soldiers, the hordes of Muscovy now face  
     you,  
 To mend the Austrian overthrow at Ulm!  
 But how so? Are not these the self-same  
     bands  
 You met and swept aside at Hollabrünn,  
 And whose retreating forms, dismayed to  
     flight,  
 Your feet pursued along the trackways here?  
     “Our own position, strong and menacing,  
 Is rich in chance for opportune attack;  
 For, say they march to cross and turn our  
     right —  
 A course almost their need — their stretching  
     flank  
 Will offer us, from points now pre-  
     arranged ——”

## VOICE OF A MARSHAL

Shows it, your Majesty, the wariness  
 That marks your usual far-eyed policy,  
 To openly announce your tactics thus  
 Some twelve hours ere their form can  
     actualize?

## VOICE OF NAPOLÉON

The zest such knowledge will impart to all  
 Is worth the risk of leakages. (To Secretary)  
     Write on.

(Dictation resumed)

“Soldiers, your columns I myself shall lead ;  
But ease your minds who would expostulate  
Against my undue rashness. If your zeal  
Sow hot confusion in the hostile ranks  
As your old manner is, and in our strength  
We mingle with our foes, I'll use fit care.  
Nevertheless, should issues stand at pause  
But for a moment, that time you will see  
Your Emperor the foremost in the shock,  
Taking his risk with every ranksman here.  
For victory, men, must be no thing surmised  
As that which may or may not beam on us,  
Like noontide sunshine on a dubious morn :  
It must be sure ! — The honour and the fame  
Of France's gay and gallant infantry —  
So dear, so cherished all the Empire  
through —  
Binds us to compass it !

Maintain the ranks ;

Let none be thinned by impulse or excuse  
Of bearing back the wounded : and, in fine,  
Be every one in this conviction firm : —  
That 'tis our sacred bond to overthrow  
These hirelings of a country not their own :  
Yea, England's hirelings, they ! — a realm  
stiff-steeled  
In deathless hatred of our land and hopes.

“The campaign closes with this victory ;  
And we return to find our standards joined

By vast new armies forming now in France.  
 Forthwith resistless, Peace establish we,  
 Worthy of you, the nation, and of me.

“NAPOLÉON.”

(To his Marshals)

So shall we prostrate these paid slaves of  
 hers —  
 England's, I mean — the root of all the war.

VOICE OF MURAT

The further details sent of Trafalgar  
 Are not assuring.

VOICE OF LANNES

What may the details be?

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON (moodily)

We learn that six-and-twenty ships of war,  
 During the fight and after, struck their flags,  
 And that the tigerish gale throughout the night  
 Gave fearful finish to the English rage.

By luck their Nelson's gone, but gone withal  
 Are twenty thousand prisoners, taken off  
 To gnaw their finger-nails in British hulks.  
 Of our vast squadrons of the summer-time  
 But rags and splintered remnants now  
 remain. —

Thuswise Villeneuve, poor craven, quitted  
 him !

Thus are my projects for the navy damned,  
 And England puffed to yet more bombastry.  
 — Well, well; I can't be everywhere. No  
 matter;

A victory's brewing here as counterpoise!  
 These water-rats may paddle in their slush  
 And welcome. 'Tis not long they'll have  
 their way.

Ships can be wrecked by land!

ANOTHER VOICE

And how by land,  
 Your Majesty, if one may query such?

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON (sardonically)

I'll bid all states of Europe shut their ports  
 To England's arrogant bottoms, slowly  
 starve

Her bloated revenues and monstrous trade,  
 Till all her hulls lie sodden in their docks,  
 And her grey island eyes in vain shall seek  
 One jack of hers upon the ocean plains!

VOICE OF SOULT

A few more master-strokes, your Majesty,  
 Must be dealt hereabout to compass such!

VOICE of NAPOLÉON

God, yes!— Even here Pitt's guineas are  
 the foes:

'Tis all a duel 'twixt this Pitt and me ;  
 And, more than Russia's host, and Austria's  
     too,

I everywhere to-night around me scent  
 As from an unseen monster haunting nigh  
 His country's hostile breath! — But come :  
     to choke it

By our to-morrow's feats, which now, in brief,  
 I recapitulate. — First Soult will move  
 To forward the grand project of the day :  
 Namely : ascend in échelon, right to front,  
 With Vandamme's men, and those of Saint  
     Hilaire :

Legrand's division somewhere further back —  
 Nearly whereat I place my finger here —  
 To be there reinforced by tirailleurs :  
 Lannes to the left here, on the Olmütz road,  
 Supported by Murat's whole cavalry.  
 While in reserve, here, are the grenadiers  
 Of Oudinot, the corps of Bernadotte,  
 Rivaud, Drouet, and the Imperial Guard.

#### MARSHALS' VOICES

'Tis as we understood, Sire, and have ordered.  
 Nought lags but day, to light our victory.

#### VOICE OF NAPOLÉON

Now let us up and ride the bivouacs round,  
 And note positions ere the soldiers sleep.  
 — Omit not from to-morrow's home dispatch

Direction that this blow of Trafalgar  
 Be hushed in all the news-sheets sold in France,  
 Or, if reported, let it be portrayed  
 As a rash fight whereout we came not worst,  
 But were so broken by the boisterous eve  
 That England claims it as her victory.

There emerge from the tent NAPOLÉON and the Marshals, who all mount the horses that are led up, and proceed through the frost and rime towards the bivouacs. At the Emperor's approach to the nearest soldiery they spring up.

#### SOLDIERS

The Emperor! He's here! The Emperor's here!

AN OLD GRENADIER (approaching Napoléon familiarly)

We'll bring thee Russian guns and flags galore  
 To celebrate thy coronation-day!

They gather into wisps the straw, hay, and other litter on which they have been lying, and kindling these at the dying fires, wave them as torches. This is repeated as each fire is reached, till the whole French position is one wide illumination. The most enthusiastic of the soldiers follow the Emperor in a throng as he progresses, and his whereabouts in the vast field is denoted by their cries.

#### CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Strange suasive pull of personality!*

## CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

*His projects they unknow, his grin unsee!*

## CHORUS OF THE PITIES

*Their loyal luckless hearts say blindly — He!*

The night-shades close over.

## SCENE II

## THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION

Midnight at the quarters of FIELD-MARSHAL PRINCE KUTÚZOF at Kresnowitz. An inner apartment is discovered, roughly adapted as a council-room. On a table with candles is unfolded a large map of Austerlitz and its environs.

The Generals are assembled in consultation round the table, WEIROTHER pointing to the map, LANGERON, BUXHÖVDEN, and MILORÁDOVICH standing by, DOKHTÓROF bending over the map, PRSCHEBISZEWSKY<sup>1</sup> indifferently walking up and down. KUTÚZOF, old and weary, with a scarred face and only one eye, is seated in a chair at the head of the table, nodding, waking, and nodding again. Some officers of lower grade are in the background, and horses in waiting are heard hoofing and champing outside.

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<sup>1</sup> This General's name should, it is said, be pronounced in three syllables, nearly PRESH-EV'-SKY.



WEIROTHER (referring to memoranda, snuffing the nearest candle, and moving it from place to place on the map as he proceeds importantly)

Now here, our right, along the Olmütz Road  
Will march and oust the French division there,  
Dislodge them from the Sainton Hill, and  
thence

Advance direct to Brünn. — You heed me,  
sirs? —

The cavalry will occupy the plain :  
Our centre and main strength, — you follow  
me? —

Count Langeron, Dokhtórof, with Prschebis-  
zewsky

And Kollowrath — now on the Prätzen  
heights —

Will down and cross the Goldback rivulet,  
Seize Tilnitz, Kobelnitz, and hamlets nigh,  
Turn the French right, move onward in their  
rear,

Cross Schwarsa, hold the great Vienna road : —  
So, with the nightfall, centre, right, and left,  
Will rendezvous beneath the walls of Brünn.

LANGERON (taking a pinch of snuff)

Good, General ; very good ! — if Bonaparte  
Will kindly stand and let you have your way.  
But what if he do not ! — if he forestall  
These sound slow movements, mount the  
Prätzen hills

When we descend, fall on *our* rear forthwith,  
While we go crying for *his* rear in vain?

KUTÚZOF (waking up)

Ay, ay, Weirother; that's the question—eh?

WEIROTHER (impatiently)

If Bonaparte had meant to climb up there,  
Being one so spry and so determinate,  
He would have set about it ere this eve!  
He has not troops to do so, sirs, I say.  
His utmost strength is forty thousand men.

LANGERON

Then if so weak, how can so wise a brain  
Court ruin by abiding calmly here  
The impact of a force so large as ours?  
He may be mounting up this very hour!  
What think you, General Milorádovich?

MILORÁDOVICH

I? What's the use of thinking, when to-  
morrow  
Will tell us, with no need to think at all!

WEIROTHER

Pah! At this moment he retires apace.  
His fires are dark; all sounds have ceased  
that way  
Save voice of owl or mongrel wintering there.

But, were he nigh, these movements I detail  
Would knock the bottom from his enterprize.

KUTÚZOF (rising)

Well, well. Now this being ordered, set it  
going.

One here shall make fair copies of the notes,  
And send them round. Colonel von Toll I ask  
To translate part. — Generals, it grows full  
late,

And half-a-dozen hours of needed sleep  
Will aid us more than maps. We now  
disperse,

And luck attend us all. Good-night. Good-  
night.

The Generals and other officers go out severally.

Such plans are — paper ! Only to-morrow's  
light

Reveals the true manœuvre to my sight !

He flaps out with his hand all the candles but one  
or two, slowly walks outside the house, and listens.  
On the high ground in the direction of the French  
lines are heard shouts, and a wide illumination grows  
and strengthens ; but the hollows are still mantled in  
fog.

Are these the signs of regiments out of heart,  
And beating backward from an enemy !

[He remains pondering.]

On the Pratzen heights immediately in front there  
begins a movement among the Russians, signifying that

the plan which involves desertion of that vantage-ground is about to be put in force. Noises of drunken singing arise from the Russian lines at various points elsewhere.

KUTÚZOF re-enters his quarters with a face of mis-giving.

The night shades involve the whole.

### SCENE III

THE SAME. THE FRENCH POSITION

Shortly before dawn on the morning of the 2nd of December. A white frost and fog still prevail in the low-lying areas ; but overhead the sky is clear. A dead silence reigns.

NAPOLÉON, on a grey horse, closely attended by BERTHIER, and surrounded by MARSHALS SOULT, LANNES, MURAT, and their aides-de-camp, all cloaked, is discernible in the gloom riding down from the high ground before Bellowitz, on which they have bivouacked, to the village of Puntowitz on the Goldbach stream, quite near the front of the Russian position of the day before on the Pratzen crest. The Emperor and his companions come to a pause, look around and upward to the hills, and listen.

NAPOLÉON

Their bivouac fires, that lit the top last night,  
Are all extinct.

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<sup>1</sup> In depicting this scene, the writer, like others, has followed without question the MS. of Langeron quoted by M. Thiers. But the singular soundness of the Count's own opinion in the consultation, as recorded, suggests that it may have been somewhat strengthened on paper at the expense of that of his companions.

LANNES

And hark you, Sire ; I catch  
A sound which, if I err not, means the thing  
We have hoped, and hoping, feared fate  
would not yield !

NAPOLÉON

My God, it surely is the tramp of horse  
And jolt of cannon downward from the hill  
Towards our right here, by the swampy lakes  
That face Davoust ? Thus, as I sketched,  
they work !

MURAT

Yes ! They already move upon Tilsnitz.

NAPOLÉON

Leave them alone ! Nor stick nor stone  
we'll stir  
To interrupt them. Nought that we can  
scheme  
Will help us like their own stark sightless-  
ness ! —  
Let them get down to those white lowlands  
there,  
And so far plunge in the level that no skill,  
When sudden vision flashes on their fault,  
Can help them, though despair-stung, to regain  
The key to mastery held at yestereve !  
Meantime move onward these divisions here

Under the fog's kind shroud ; descend the  
 slope,  
 And cross the stream below the Russian lines :  
 There halt concealed, till I send down the word.

NAPOLÉON and his staff retire to the hill south-east of Bellowitz as the day dawns pallidly.

'Tis good to get above that rimy cloak  
 And into cleaner air. It chilled me through.

When they reach the summit they are over the fog : and suddenly the sun breaks forth radiantly to the left of the Pratzén upland, illuminating the ash-hued face of NAPOLÉON and the faces of those around him. All eyes are turned first to the sun, and thence to look for the dense masses of men that had occupied the upland the night before.

#### MURAT

I see them not. The plateau seems deserted!

#### NAPOLÉON (exultantly)

Gone ; verily !— Ah, how much will you give,  
 An hour hence, for the coign abandoned now !  
 The battle's ours. — It was, then, their rash  
 march  
 Downwards to Tilnitz and the Goldbach  
 swamps  
 Before dawn, that we heard. — No hurry,  
 Lannes !  
 Enjoy this sun, that rests its chubby jowl  
 Upon the plain, and thrusts its bristling beard

Across the lowlands' fleecy counterpane,  
Peering beneath our broadest hat-brims'  
shade. . . .

Soult, how long hence to win the Pratzen  
top?

SOULT

Some twenty minutes or less, your Majesty:  
Our troops down there, still mantled by the  
mist,  
Are half upon the way.

NAPOLÉON

Good! Set forthwith  
Vandamme and Saint Hilaire to mount the  
slopes —

Firing begins in the marsh to the right by Tilitz and  
the pools, though the thick air yet hides the operations.

O, there you are, blind boozy Buxhövdén!  
Achieve your worst. Davoust will hold you  
firm.

The head of an aide-de-camp rises through the fog  
on that side, and he hastens up to NAPOLÉON and his  
companions, to whom the officer announces what has  
happened. DAVOUST rides off, disappearing legs first into  
the white stratum that covers the attack.

Lannes and Murat, you have concern enough  
Here on the left, with Prince Bagration  
And all the Austro-Russian cavalry.

Haste off. The victory promising to-day  
Will, like a thunder-clap, conclude the war!

The Marshals with their aides gallop away towards their respective divisions. Soon the two divisions under SOULT are seen ascending in close column the inclines of the Pratzen height. Thereupon the heads of the Russian centre columns disclose themselves, breaking the sky-line of the summit from the other side, in a desperate attempt to regain the position vacated by the Russian left. A fierce struggle develops there between SOULT's divisions and these, who, despite their tardy attempt to recover the lost post of dominance, are pressed by the French off the slopes into the lowland.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*O Great Necessitator, heed us now!*

*If it indeed must be*

*That this day Austria smoke with slaughter,  
Quicken the issue as Thou knowest how;  
And dull to suffering those whom it befalls  
To quit their lodgment in a flesh that galls!*

SEMICHORUS II

*If it be in the future human story*

*To lift this man to yet intenser glory,*

*Let the exploit be done*

*With the least sting, or none,*

*To those, his kind, at whose expense such height  
is won!*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Again ye deprecate the World-Soul's way*

*That I so long have told? Then note anew*



*(Since ye forget) the ordered potencies,  
Nerves, sinews, trajects, eddies, ducts of It  
The Eternal Urger, pressing change on change.*

At once, as earlier, a preternatural clearness possesses the atmosphere of the battle-field, in which the scene becomes anatomized and the living masses of humanity transparent. The controlling Immanent Will appears therein, as a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitching, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms.

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS (aerial  
music)

*O Innocents, can ye forget  
That things to be were shaped and set  
Ere mortals and this planet met?*

SEMICHORUS II

*Stand ye apostrophizing That  
Which, working all, works but thereat  
Like some sublime fermenting-vat*

SEMICHORUS I

*Heaving throughout its vast content  
With strenuously transmutive bent  
Though of its aim unscientent? —*

SEMICHORUS II

*Could ye have seen Its early deeds  
Ye would not cry, as one who pleads  
For quarter, when a Europe bleeds!*

## SEMICHORUS I

*Ere ye, young Pities, had upgrown  
From out the deeps where mortals moan  
Against a ruling not their own,*

## SEMICHORUS II

*He of the Years beheld, and we,  
Creation's prentice artistry  
Express in forms that now unbe*

## SEMICHORUS I

*Tentative dreams from day to day ;  
Mangle its types, re-knead the clay  
In some more palpitating way ;*

## SEMICHORUS II

*Beheld the rarest wrecked amain,  
Whole nigh-perfected species slain  
By those that scarce could boast a brain ;*

## SEMICHORUS I

*Saw ravage, growth, diminish, add,  
Or peoples sane or peoples mad,  
In choiceless round of good and bad ;*

## SEMICHORUS II

*Heard laughters at the ruthless dooms  
Which tortured to the eternal glooms  
Quick, quivering hearts in hecatombs.*

## CHORUS

*Us Ancients, then, it ill befits  
To quake when Slaughter's spectre flits  
Athwart this field of Austerlitz!*

## SHADE OF THE EARTH

*Pain not their young compassions by such lore,  
But hold you mute, and read the battle yonder :  
The moment marks the day's catastrophe.*

## SCENE IV

## THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION

It is about noon, and the vital spectacle is now near the village of Tilnitz. The fog has dispersed, and the sun shines clearly, though without warmth, the ice on the pools gleaming under its radiance.

GENERAL BUXHÖVDEN and his aides-de-camp have reined up, and remain at pause on a hillock. The General watches through a glass his battalions, which are still disputing the village. Suddenly approach down the track from the upland of Pratzen large companies of Russian infantry helter-skelter. COUNT LANGERON is beheld to be retreating with them ; and soon, pale and agitated, he hastens up to GENERAL BUXHÖVDEN, whose face is flushed.

## LANGERON

While they're upon us you stay idle here !  
Prschebiszewsky's column is distraught and  
rent,

And more than half my own made captive!  
 Yea,  
 Kreznówitz carried, and Sokólnitz hemmed:  
 The enemy's whole strength will greet you  
 soon!

BUXHÖVDEN

You seem to see the enemy everywhere.

LANGERON

You cannot see them, be they here or no!

BUXHÖVDEN

I only wait Prschebiszewsky's nearing corps  
 To join Dokhtórof's to them. Here they  
 come.

SOULT, supported by BERNADOTTE and OUDINOT, having cleared and secured the Prätzen height, his battalions are perceived descending from it on this side, behind DOKHTÓROF's division, so placing the latter between themselves and the pools.

LANGERON

You cannot tell the Frenchmen from ourselves!  
 These are the victors. — Ah — Dokhtórof —  
 lost!

DOKHTÓROF's troops are seen to be retreating towards the water. The watchers stand in painful tenseness.

## BUXHÖVDEN

Dokhtórof tell to save him as he may !  
We, Count, must gather up our shaken men  
And hurry by the road through Austerlitz.

BUXHÖVDEN's regiments and the remains of LANGERON's are rallied and collected, and they retreat by way of the hamlet of Aujezd. As they go over the summit of a hill BUXHÖVDEN looks back. LANGERON's columns, which were behind his own, have been cut off by VANDAMME's division coming down from the Pratzen plateau. This and some detachments from DOKHTÓROF's column rush towards the Satschan lake and endeavour to cross it on the ice. It cracks beneath their weight. At the same moment NAPOLÉON and his brilliant staff appear on the top of the Pratzen.

The Emperor watches the scene with a vulpine smile, and directs a battery near at hand to fire down upon the ice on which the Russians are crossing. A ghastly crash and splashing follows the discharge, the shining surface breaking into pieces like a mirror, which fly in all directions. Two thousand fugitives are engulfed, and their groans of despair reach the ears of the watchers like ironical huzzas.

A general flight of the Russian army from wing to wing is now disclosed, involving in its current the EMPEROR ALEXANDER and the EMPEROR FRANCIS, with the reserve, who are seen towards Austerlitz endeavouring to rally their troops in vain. They are swept along by the disordered soldiery.

## SCENE V

THE SAME. NEAR THE WINDMILL OF  
PALENY

The mill is about seven miles to the southward, between the French advanced posts and the Austrians.

A bivouac fire is burning. NAPOLÉON, in grey overcoat and beaver hat turned up front and back, rides to the spot with BERTHIER, SAVARY, and his aides, and alights. He walks to and fro complacently, meditating or talking to BERTHIER. Two groups of officers, one from each army, stand in the background on their respective sides.

NAPOLÉON

What's this of Alexander? Weep, did he,  
Like his old namesake, but for meaner cause?  
Ha, ha!

BERTHIER

'Tis told, your Majesty, that Colonel Toll,  
One of Field-Marshal Prince Kutúzof's staff,  
In the retreating swirl of overthrow,  
Found Alexander seated on a stone  
Beneath a leafless roadside apple tree,  
Out here by Göding on the Holitsch way;  
His coal-black uniform and snowy plume  
Unmarked, his face disconsolate, his grey eyes  
Mourning in tears the fate of his brave  
troops —  
All flying southward, save the steadfast slain.

## NAPOLÉON

Poor devil! — But he'll soon get over it —  
Sooner than his employers oversea! —  
Ha! — this will make friend Pitt and England  
writhe,  
And cloud somewhat their lustrous Trafalgar.

An open carriage approaches from the direction of Holitsch, accompanied by a small escort of Hungarian guards. NAPOLÉON walks forward to meet it as it draws up, and welcomes the Austrian Emperor, who alights. He is wearing a grey cloak over a white uniform, carries a light walking-cane, and is attended by PRINCE JOHN OF LICHTENSTEIN, SWARZENBERG, and others. His fresh-coloured face contrasts strangely with the bluish pallor of NAPOLÉON's; but it is now thin and anxious.

They formally embrace. BERTHIER, PRINCE JOHN, and the rest retire, and the two Emperors are left by themselves before the fire.

## NAPOLÉON

Here on the roofless ground do I receive  
you —  
My only mansion for these two months past!

## FRANCIS

Your tenancy thereof has brought such fame  
That it must needs be one which charms you,  
Sire.

## NAPOLÉON

Good! Now this war. It has been forced  
on me

Just at a crisis most inopportune,  
When all my energies and arms were bent  
On teaching England that her watery walls  
Are no defence against the wrath of France  
Aroused by breach of solemn covenants.

## FRANCIS

I had no zeal for violating peace  
Till ominous events in Italy  
Revealed the gloomy truth that France  
aspires  
To conquest there, and undue sovereignty.  
Since when mine eyes have seen no sign  
outheld  
To signify a change of purposings.

## NAPOLÉON

Yet there were terms distinctly specified  
To General Giulay in November past,  
Whereon I'd gladly fling the sword aside.  
To wit: in order that hot jealousy  
Stir us no more anent transalpine rule,  
I'd take the Isongo river as our bounds.

## FRANCIS

Roundly, that I cede all. — And how may  
stand  
Your views as to the Russian forces here?



## NAPOLÉON

You have all to lose by that alliance, Sire.  
Leave Russia. Let the Emperor Alexander  
Make his own terms ; whereof the first must  
be

That he retire from Austrian territory.  
I'll grant an armistice therefor. Anon  
I'll treat with him to weld a lasting peace,  
Based on some simple understandings ; chief,  
That Russian armies keep to Russian soil,  
And that, moreover, every English keel  
Be locked out from the ports of his domain.  
Meanwhile to you I'll tender this good word :  
Keep Austria to herself. To Russia bound,  
You pay your own costs with your provinces,  
And Alexander's likewise therewithal.

## FRANCIS

I see as much, and long have seen it, Sire ;  
And standing here the vanquished, let me own  
What happier issues might have left unsaid :  
Long, long I have lost the wish to bind my-  
self

To Russia's purposings and Russia's risks ;  
Little do I count these alliances  
With Powers that have no substance seizable !

As they converse they walk away.

## AN AUSTRIAN OFFICER

O strangest scene of an eventful life,  
This junction that I witness here to-day!  
An Emperor — in whose majestic veins  
Aeneas and the proud Caesarian line  
Claim yet to live; and those scarce less  
renowned,  
The dauntless Hawks'-Hold Counts, of  
gallantry  
So great in fame one thousand years ago —  
To bend with deference and manners mild  
In talk with this adventuring campaigner,  
Raised but by pikes above the common herd!

## ANOTHER AUSTRIAN OFFICER

Ay! There be Satschan swamps and Pratzen  
heights  
In royal lines, as here at Austerlitz.

The Emperors again draw near.

## FRANCIS

Then, to this armistice, which shall be called  
Immediately at all points, I agree;  
And pledge my word that my august ally  
Accept it likewise, and withdraw his force  
By daily measured march to his own realm.

## NAPOLÉON

For him I take your word. And pray believe  
That rank ambitions are your own, not mine ;  
That though I have postured as your enemy,  
And likewise Alexander's, we are one  
In interests, have in all things common cause.

One country sows these mischiefs Europe  
through

By her insidious chink of luring ore —  
False-featured England, who, to aggrandize  
Her name, her influence, and her revenues,  
Schemes to impropriate the whole world's  
trade,

And starves and bleeds the folk of other  
lands.

Her rock-rimmed situation walls her off,  
Like a slim selfish mollusk in its shell,  
From the wide views and fair fraternities  
Which on the mainland we reciprocate,  
And spurs her search for profit in our woes.

## FRANCIS

I am not competent, your Majesty,  
To estimate that country's conscience now,  
Nor to engage on my ally's behalf  
That English ships be shut from Russian  
trade.

But joyful am I that in all things else  
My promise can be made ; and that this day  
Our conference ends in friendship and esteem.

## NAPOLÉON

I will send Savary at to-morrow's blink  
 And make all lucid to the Emperor.  
 For us, I wholly can avow as mine  
 The cordial spirit of your Majesty.

They retire towards the carriage of FRANCIS. BERTHIER, SAVARY, LICHTENSTEIN, and the suite of officers advance from the background, and with mutual gestures of courtesy and amicable leave-takings the two Emperors part company.

## CHORUS OF THE PITIES (aerial music)

*Each for himself, his family, his heirs ;  
 For the wan weltering nations who concerns,  
 who cares ?*

## CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

*A pertinent query, in truth ! —  
 But spoil not the sport by your ruth :  
     'Tis enough to make half  
     Yonder zodiac laugh  
 When rulers begin to allude  
     To their lack of ambition,  
     And strong opposition  
 To all but the general good !*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Hushlevities. Events press on. Turn westward.*

The curtain of cloud draws slowly across.

## SCENE VI

SHOCKERWICK HOUSE, NEAR BATH

The interior of the Picture Gallery. Enter WILTSHIRE the owner, and PITT, who looks emaciated and walks feebly.

WILTSHIRE (pointing to a portrait)

Now here you have the lady we discussed:  
A fine example of his manner, sir?

PITT

It is a fine example, sir, indeed, —  
With that transparency amid the shades,  
And those thin blue-green-greyish leafages  
Behind the pillar in the background there,  
Which seem the leaves themselves. — Ah, this  
is Quin.

WILTSHIRE

Yes, Quin. A man of varied parts, though  
rough  
And choleric at times. Yet, at his best,  
As Falstaff, never matched, they say. But I  
Had not the fate to see him in the flesh.

PITT

Churchill well carves him in his "Characters":—

"His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,  
Proclaimed the sullen habit of his soul.  
In fancied scenes, as in Life's real plan,  
He could not for a moment sink the man:  
Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in;  
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—still 'twas Quin."  
—He was at Bath when Gainsborough settled  
there

In that house in the Circus which we know. —  
I like the portrait much. — The brilliancy  
Of Gainsborough lies in this his double sway:  
Sovereign of landscape he; of portraiture  
Joint monarch with Sir Joshua. — Ah? — that's  
— hark!

Is that the patter of a horse's hoofs  
Along the road?

WILTSHIRE

I notice nothing, sir.

PITT

It is a gallop, growing quite distinct.  
And — can it be a messenger for me!

WILTSHIRE

I hope no awkward European news  
'To stop the honour of this visit, sir!

They listen. The gallop of the horse grows louder, and is checked at the door of the house. There is a hasty knocking, and a courier, splashed with mud from hard riding, is shown into the gallery. He presents a dispatch to PITT, who sits down and hurriedly opens it.

PITT (to himself)

O heavy news indeed! . . . Disastrous; dire!

He appears overcome as he sits, and covers his forehead with his hand.

WILTSHIRE

I trust you are not ill, sir?

PITT

Could I have  
A little brandy, sir, quick brought to me?

WILTSHIRE

In one brief minute.

Brandy is brought in, and PITT takes it.

PITT

Now leave me, please, alone. I'll call anon.  
Is there a map of Europe handy here?

WILTSHIRE fetches a map from the library, and spreads it before the minister. WILTSHIRE, courier, and servant go out.

O God that I should live to see this day!

He remains awhile in a profound reverie; then resumes the reading of the dispatch.

“Defeated — the Allies — quite overthrown  
At Austerlitz — last week.” — Where’s Austerlitz?

— But what avails it where the place is now;  
What corpse is curious on the longitude  
And situation of his cemetery! . . .

The Austrians and the Russians overcome,  
That vast adventuring army is set free  
To bend unhindered strength against our  
shores. . . .

So do my plans through all these plodding years  
Announce them built in vain! . . .

His heel on Europe, monarchies in chains  
To France, I am as though I had not been!

He gloomily ponders the dispatch and the map some minutes longer. At last he rises with difficulty, and rings the bell.

A servant enters.

Call up my carriage, please you, now at once;  
And tell your master I return to Bath  
This moment. — I may want a little help  
In getting to the door here.

SERVANT

Sir, I will,  
And summon you my master instantly.



He goes out and re-enters with WILTSHIRE. PITT is assisted from the room.

PITT

Roll up that map. 'Twill not be needed now  
 These ten years! Realms, laws, peoples,  
 dynasties,  
 Are churning to a pulp within the maw  
 Of empire-making Lust and personal Gain!

[Exeunt PITT, WILTSHIRE, and servant; and in a few minutes the carriage is heard driving off, and the scene closes.

## SCENE VII

PARIS. A STREET LEADING TO THE  
 TUILLERIES

It is night, and the dim oil lamps reveal a vast  
 concourse of citizens of both sexes around the Palace-  
 gates and in the neighbouring thoroughfares.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS (to the Spirit of  
 Rumour)

*Thou may'st descend and join this crowd awhile,  
 And speak what things shall come into thy  
 mouth.*

SPIRIT SINISTER

*I'll hearken! I wouldn't miss it for the  
 groans of another Austerlitz!*

The Spirit of Rumour enters on the scene in the disguise of a young foreigner.

SPIRIT (to a street-woman)

*Lady, a late hour this to be afoot!*

WOMAN

But such is meet in gallant dames like me,  
For now He nears! — after a three months'  
whirl  
Of victories won on fields whose homely  
names  
Had never swept the ear of mortal man  
Beyond the haunts of neighbour peasantry;  
But cymballed now by deathless deeds, become  
Familiar rhythms in remotest homes!

SPIRIT

*Rare! To it again. I could give heed all  
night.*

WOMAN

Poor profit, then, to me from my true trade,  
Wherein hot competition is so rife  
Already, since these victories brought to town  
So many foreign jobbers in my line,  
That I'd best hold my tongue from praise  
of fame!  
However, one is caught by popular zeal,

And though five midnights have not brought  
a sou,

I, too, chant *fubilate* like the rest. —

In courtesies have haughty monarchs vied  
Towards the Conqueror! who, with men-at-  
arms

One quarter theirs, has vanquished by his  
nerve

Vast musterings four - hundred - thousand  
strong,

And given new tactics to the art of war  
Unparalleled in Europe's history!

## SPIRIT

*What man is this, whose deeds thou blazon'st  
so —*

*Who makes the earth to tremble, shakes old  
thrones,*

*And turns the plains to wilderness?*

## WOMAN

Dost ask

As ignorant, yet asking can define?

What mean you, traveller?

## SPIRIT

*I am a stranger here,  
A wandering wight, whose life has not been  
spent*

*This side the globe, though I can speak the tongue.*

WOMAN

Your air has truth in't; but your state is  
strange!  
Had I a husband he should tackle thee.

SPIRIT

*Dozens thou hast had—batches more than she  
Samaria knew, if now thou hast not one!*

WOMAN

Wilt take the situation from this hour?

SPIRIT

*Thou know'st not what thy frailty asks, good  
dame!*

WOMAN

Well, learn in small the Emperor's chronicle,  
As gleaned from what my soldier-husbands  
say:—  
Some five-and-forty standards of his foes  
Are brought to Paris, borne triumphantly  
In proud procession through the surging  
streets,  
Ever as brands of fame to shine aloft  
In dim-lit senate-halls and city aisles.

## SPIRIT

*Fair Munich sparkled with festivity  
As there he tarried somewhat, and was met  
By the gay Joséphine your Empress here.—  
There, too, Eugène—*

## WOMAN

Napoléon's stepson he——

## SPIRIT

*Received for gift the hand of fair Princess  
Augusta (daughter of Bavaria's king,  
Forced from her plighted troth to Baden's heir,)  
And, to complete his honouring, was hailed  
Successor to the throne of Italy.*

## WOMAN

How know you, ere this news has got  
abroad?

## SPIRIT

*Channels have I the common people lack.—  
There, on the nonce, the forenamed Baden prince  
Was joined to Stéphanie Beauharnais, her  
Who stands as daughter to the man we wait,  
Some say as more.*

## WOMAN

They do? Then such not I.  
 Can revolution's dregs so soil thy soul  
 That thou shouldst doubt the eldest son  
 thereof?  
 'Tis dangerous to insinuate nowadays!

## SPIRIT

*Right! Lady many-spoused, more charity  
 Upbrims in thee than in some loftier ones  
 Who would not name thee with their white-  
 washed tongues. —  
 Enough. I am one whom, didst thou know my  
 name,  
 Thou wouldst not grudge a claim to speak his  
 mind.*

## WOMAN

A thousand pardons, sir.

## SPIRIT

*Resume thy tale  
 If so thou wishest.*

## WOMAN

Nay, but you know best —

## SPIRIT

*How laurelled progress through applauding  
crowds  
Have marked his journey home. How Stras-  
burg town,  
Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, acclaimed him like the rest:  
How pageantry would here have welcomed him,  
Had not his speed outstript intelligence.  
—Now will a glimpse of him repay thee.  
Hark!*

Shouts arise and increase in the distance, announcing BONAPARTE'S approach.

*Well, Buonaparté has revived by land,  
But not by sea. On that thwart element  
Never will he incorporate his dream,  
And float as master!*

## WOMAN

What shall hinder him?

## SPIRIT

*That which has hereto. England, so to speak.*

## WOMAN

But she's in straits. She's lost her Nelson  
now,  
(A worthy man: he loved a woman well!)

George drools and babbles in a darkened  
 room ;  
 Her heaven-born minister declines apace ;  
 All smooths the Emperor's way.

## SPIRIT

*Tales have two sides,  
 Sweet lady. Vamped-up news may reach thee  
 here. —*

*That Austerlitz was lustrous none denies,  
 But would it shock thy garrulousness to know  
 That the true measure of this Trafalgar —  
 Utter defeat, ay, France's naval death —  
 Your Emperor bade be hid?*

## WOMAN

The seer's gift  
 Has never plenteously endowed me, sir,  
 As in appearance you. But to plain sense  
 Things seem as stated.

## SPIRIT

*We'll let seemings be. —  
 But know, these English take to liquid life  
 Right patly — nursed therefor in infancy  
 By rimes and rains which creep into their  
 blood,  
 Till like seeks like. The sea is their dry land,  
 And, as on cobbles you, they wayfare there.*



## WOMAN

Heaven prosper, then, their watery way-  
farings  
If they'll leave us the land! — (The Imperial  
carriage appears.) The Emperor! —  
Long live the Emperor! — He's the best  
by land.

BONAPARTE'S carriage arrives, without an escort. The street-lamps shine in, and reveal the EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE seated beside him. The plaudits of the people grow boisterous as they hail him Victor of Austerlitz. The more active run after the carriage, which turns in from the Rue St. Honoré to the Carrousel, and thence vanishes into the Court of the Tuilleries.

## WOMAN

May all success attend his next exploit!

## SPIRIT

*Namely: to put the knife in England's trade,  
And teach her treaty-manners—if he can!*

## WOMAN

I like not your queer knowledge, creepy man.  
There's weirdness in your air. I'd call you  
ghost  
Had not the Goddess Reason laid all such  
Past Mother Church's cunning to restore.

— Adieu. I'll not be yours to-night. I'd starve first!

She withdraws. The crowd wastes away, and the Spirit vanishes.

## SCENE VIII

PUTNEY. BOWLING-GREEN HOUSE

PITT's bedchamber, from the landing without. It is afternoon. At the back of the room as seen through the doorway is a curtained bed, beside which a woman sits, the LADY HESTER STANHOPE. Bending over a table at the front of the room is SIR WALTER FARQUHAR, the physician. PARSLow the footman and another servant are near the door.

TOMLINE, Bishop of Lincoln, enters.

FARQUHAR (in a subdued voice)

I grieve to call your lordship up again,  
But symptoms lately have disclosed them-  
selves

That mean the knell to the frail life in him.  
And whatsoever things of gravity  
It may be needful to communicate,  
Let them be spoken now. Time may not  
serve

If they be much delayed.

## TOMLINE

Ah, stands it thus? . . .  
 The name of his disease is — Austerlitz!  
 His brow's inscription has been Austerlitz  
 From that dire morning in the month just  
     past  
 When tongues of rumour twanged the word  
     across  
 From its hid nook on the Moravian plains.

## FARQUHAR

And yet he might have borne it, had the  
     weight  
 Of governmental shackles been unclasped,  
 Even partly, from his limbs last Lammastide,  
 When that despairing journey to the King  
 At Gloucester Lodge by Wessex shore was  
     made  
 To beg such. But relief the King refused.  
 “Why want you Fox? What — Grenville  
     and his friends?”  
 He harped. “You are sufficient without  
     these —  
 Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war!”  
 And fibre that would rather snap than shrink  
 Held out no longer. Now the upshot nears.

LADY HESTER STANHOPE turns her head and comes forward.

## LADY HESTER

I am grateful you are here again, good friend !  
He's sleeping at this moment ; but once more  
Has asked for tidings of Lord Harrowby,  
And murmured of his mission to Berlin  
As Europe's forlorn hope ; if, sure, it be  
That any hope remain !

## TOMLINE

There's no news yet. —  
These several days while I have been sitting  
by him  
He has inquired the quarter of the wind,  
And asked me to observe the stable cock.  
When I said " East," he answered " That is  
well !  
Those are the breezes that will speed him  
home !"  
So cling his heart-strings to his country's cause.

## FARQUHAR

I fear that Wellesley's visit here by now  
Gave him too long a strain. He quite broke  
down,  
And has fast weakened since.

## LADY HESTER

Ah ! now he wakes.  
Please come and speak to him as you would  
wish (to TOMLINE).

LADY HESTER, TOMLINE, and FARQUHAR retire behind the bed, where in a short time voices are heard in prayer. Afterwards the Bishop goes to a writing-table, and LADY HESTER comes to the doorway. Steps are heard on the stairs, and PITT's friend ROSE, the President of the Board of Trade, appears on the landing and makes inquiries.

LADY HESTER (whispering)

He leaves the settlement of his affairs  
To his old friend the Bishop. But his words  
Bespeak too much anxiety for me,  
And underrate his services so far  
That he has doubts if his past deeds deserve  
Sufficient recognition by the State  
To warrant trifling pensions to his kin.  
He had been fain to write down his intents,  
But the quill dropped from his unmuscled  
hand. —

Now his friend Tomline pens what he dictates  
As to the items of his last desires.

ROSE and LADY HESTER turn. They see the Bishop bending over the bed with a sheet of paper on which he has previously been writing. A little later he dips a quill and holds it within the bed-curtain, spreading the paper beneath. A thin white hand emerges from behind the curtain and signs the paper. The Bishop beckons forward the two servants, who also sign.

FARQUHAR on one side of the bed, and TOMLINE on the other, are spoken to by the dying man. The Bishop afterwards withdraws from the bed and comes to the landing where the others are.

## TOMLINE

A list of his directions has been drawn,  
And feeling somewhat more at mental ease  
He asks Sir Walter how long he's to live.  
Farquhar just answered, in a soothing tone,  
That hope still frailly breathed recovery.  
At this my dear friend smiled and shook his  
    head,  
As if to say: "I can translate your words,  
But I reproach not friendship's lullabies."

## ROSE

Rest he required; and rest was not for him.

FARQUHAR comes forward as they wait.

## FARQUHAR

His strain of concentration on these things,  
Determined now, that long have worried him,  
Have left him in a numbing lethargy,  
From which I fear he may not rouse to  
    strength  
For speech with us again.

## ROSE

But hark. He does.

They listen.

## PITT

My country! How I leave my country! . . .

TOMLINE

Ah, —

Immense the matter those poor words contain!

ROSE

Still does his soul stay wrestling with that  
 theme,  
 And still it will, even semi-consciously,  
 Until the drama's done.

They continue to converse by the doorway in  
 whispers. PITT sinks slowly into a stupor, from which  
 he never awakens.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES (to the Spirit  
 of the Years)

*Do you intend to speak to him ere the close?*

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*Nay, I have spoke too often! Time and time,  
 When all Earth's light has lain on the nether  
 side,  
 And yapping midnight winds have leapt on  
 roofs,  
 And raised for him an evil harlequinade  
 Of national disasters in long train,  
 That tortured him with harrowing grimace,  
 Have I communed with that intelligence.  
 Now I would leave him to pass out in peace  
 And seek the silence unperturbedly.*

## SPIRIT SINISTER

*Even Its official Spirit can show ruth  
At man's fag end, when his destruction's sure!*

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

*It suits us ill to cavil each with each.  
I might retort. I only say to thee  
ITS slaves we are: Its slaves must ever be!*

## CHORUS (aerial music)

*Yea, from the Vague we shape, like these,  
And tarry till That please  
To null us by Whose stress we emanate.—  
Our incorporeal sense,  
Our overseeings, our supernal state,  
Our readings Why and Whence,  
Are but the flower of Man's intelligence;  
And that but an unreckoned incident  
Of the all-urging Will, raptly magnipotent.*

A curtain of cloud overdraws.

END OF THE FIRST PART OF 'THE DYNASTS.'



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*(Subject to revision)*

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,, IV. The Same. The Prussian Army.  
,, V. Berlin.  
,, VI. The Same.

### ACT SECOND

- Scene I. King George's Watering-place, South  
Wessex.  
,, II. The Shore of Portugal.  
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- Scene VIII. The Same.  
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- Scene I. Road between Bembibre and Lugo.  
 „ II. Road near Astorga.  
 „ III. Before Coruña.  
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- Scene I. Schönbrunn.  
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## ACT FIRST

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,, II. A Wessex Village.

AFTER SCENE. THE OVERWORLD.

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NOTE. — The Second and Third Parts are in hand, but their publication is not guaranteed.

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